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250 Dead, 2,000 Injured in Mecca Fire

MECCA, Saudi Arabia — Around 250 people were killed, including 150 Indians, and 2,000 people injured in the huge fire that ripped through pilgrims' tents near Mecca, an Indian official said Wednesday.

"We have been told (by Saudi authorities) that the figure stands at around 250 killed and 2,000 injured, mostly from the subcontinent," said an official at a crisis center set up by Indian officials to cope with inquiries of relatives.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

President Felicitates Heads of Islamic States on Eid-ul-Azha

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani here on Wednesday cabled separate messages to the heads of all Islamic countries felicitating them on the auspicious occassion of Eid-ul-Azha.

In his message, President Rafsanjani expressed hope for stronger unity and solidarity among Islamic countries and wished for the prosperity of all Islamic nations across the globe.

Australia Won't Interfere With Iran Trade Ties

CANBERRA — The Australian government is not considering trade sanctions against Iran and contracts for massive grain exports are not threatened, Trade Minister Tim Fischer said Wednesday.

"Australia does not seek to interfere with the commercial negotiations, by the Australian wheat board, by a large company or by a small company, with regard to the two-way trade that exists between Australia and Iran," Fischer told reporters.

Australia this week recalled its ambassador in Tehran, Stuart Hume, for consultations.

Iran also recalled its ambassadors and cancelling a visit to Tehran next month by an Australia-Iran Chamber of Commerce and Industry delegation.

"We won't be taking any unilateral or hasty decisions," the spokesman of Austrian Foreign Minister said.

"Both Iran and Australia see trade as very important to their countries ... both sides would be reluctant to bring that trade into jeopardy," Wheat Board Chairman Trevor Flugge said.

(AFP)

Germany Loses Trust of Iranian People

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei in a meeting with army commanders and personnel here Wednesday said that the German government should pay a high price for its mistake, adding that Germany will be the main loser in this regard because it has lost the trust of Iranian people.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces said what is surprizing is that why they repeat such experiences and why they have developed such a wrong assumption in their invalid minds.

"The Iranian nation has not entered the arena by relying on Europe, Asia or others so that now with their departure it feels it has been left alone," the Supreme Leader said.

"If the U.S. and the Zionists manage to separate Europe from Iran and pit other enemies tens times as many as Europe against Iran, this (Iranian) nation will not retreat even one step from its resistance to the bullyings of the U.S. or any other governments," Ayatollah Khamenei made it clear.

Terming the German government as a victim of the U.S.-Zionism plot, the Supreme Leader said "why the German government made such a mistake that the Zionists managed to arrange such a puppet show under its nose and to insult the Iranian nation."

"Germany left behind a very bitter experience and it should pay the price for its mistake. Germany has lost something that cannot regain easily and that is the trust of the Iranian nation and government in Germany's sincerity," Ayatollah Khamenei pointed out.

The Supreme Leader said that the U.S. or any other power in the world that may cherish hostile attitude towards Iran could not do a damn thing.

Terming the reaction of certain European countries to the Mykonos affair as "very bad", Ayatollah Khamenei stated "The Foreign Ministry has been instructed to carefully register the behavior of those government in this meaningless show so that they can be recorded in the history of the Iranian people."

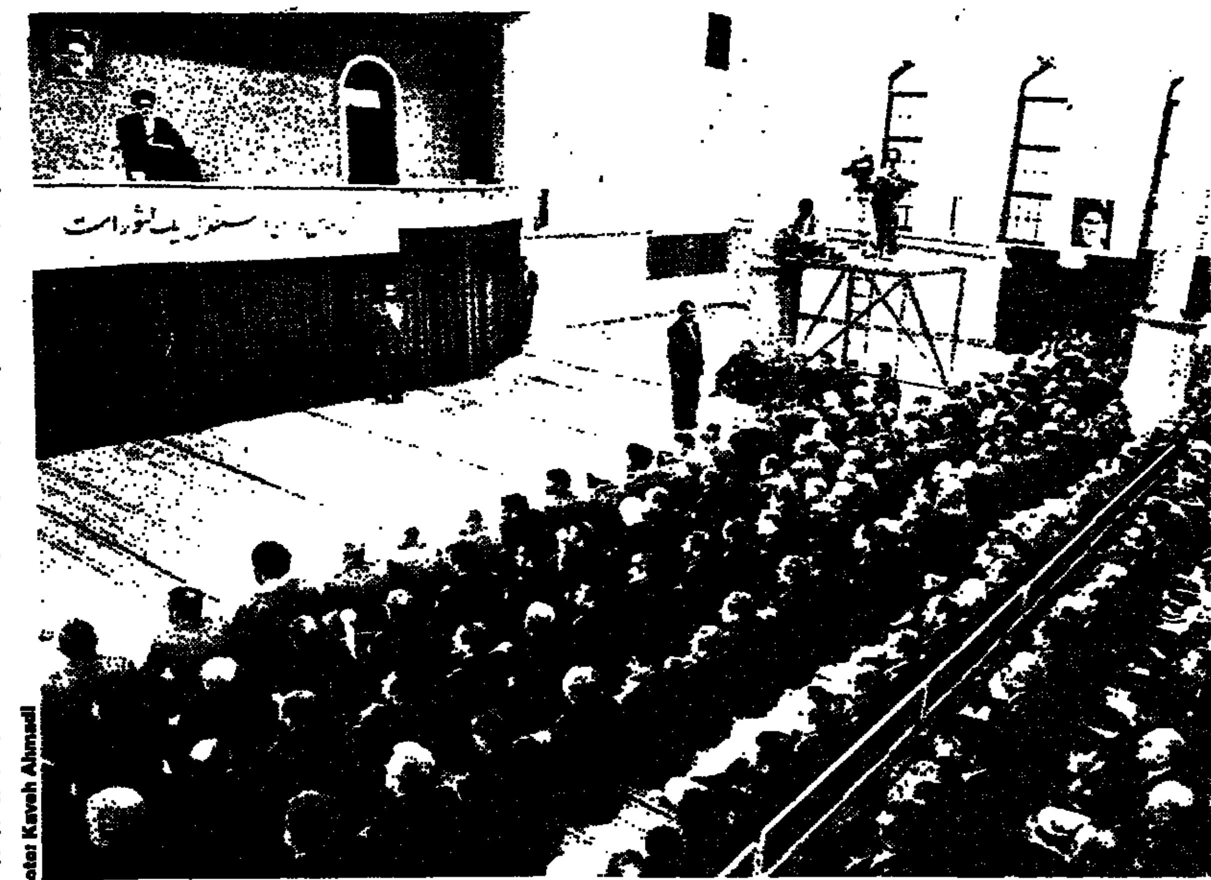


Photo: Kaveh Ahmadi

New Zealand FM Admits Haste in Calling Home Its Ambassador

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — New Zealand's foreign minister, admitted he acted hastily in recalling his country's ambassador here, adding that the ambassador has already been told to return to Tehran today.

Leading dailies in Wellington, capital of New Zealand, wrote that upon his arrival in Tehran the ambassador will be submitting a message from the foreign minister to Iranian authorities.

According to the dailies, the foreign minister in his message has called for restoration of normal relations between New Zealand and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In response to a question posed by a reporter in Wellington on his hasty move, the New Zealand foreign minister said: "I would soon be blamed for not calling the ambassador if I did not make such a move."

Newspapers in wellington wrote yesterday that the government of New Zealand expected Iran to close the gap that has been created in its relations with Iran after its recall of its ambassador.

Iran to Establish Institute for Religious Questions

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — An institute to provide answers to Muslims religious questions will soon be established here, the secretary of the Islamic Society of Researchers, Dr. Sadeq Mahfouzi, told the *Tehran Times*.



MAHFOUZI

The institute, which is yet to be named, will try to answer any question Muslims might need to know and will use the knowledge and expertise of over 1000 religious scholars and other researchers and will endeavor to become a world center for

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Thousands of Muslims Hold Disavowal of Pagans Rally



REYSHAHRI

By Ali Rezvani Moqaddam

ARAFAT — Tens of thousand of Muslims from different Islamic countries held a ceremony here to express their hatred of the enemies of Islam, specially the U.S. and the Zionist regime, here on Wednesday morning.

The ceremony was inaugurated by reciting verses from the Holy Qoran. The message of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei was read to the multi-national audience by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati a member of the Guardian Council.

Addressing the audiences also, Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri, the Leader's Representative for Hajj Affairs, called for Muslim unity throughout the world.

He referred to the U.S.-hatched conspiracies against the Islamic world and said if the Muslim countries decide not to sell oil to the U.S. the Great Satan, would come to its knees in one month.

Pointing to some catastrophes in some Muslim countries, like Afghanistan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Hojjatoleslam Reyshahri said the reason behind these catastrophes is is that Muslims have not been able to understand Islam properly.

If they realize the meaning of Towhid, they will not cooperate with the enemies of Islam, the U.S. and the Zionist regime, he added.

Referring to the Islamic Republic of Iran as an example of resistance against the aggressive U.S., Hojjatoleslam Reyshahri said the Muslim states can learn resistance from the Iranian nation. He later called for Muslim unity against the enemies of Islam.

He concluded that Mykonos court conspiracy hatched by the U.S. and the Zionism aims at preventing unity among Muslims.

Chemical Weapon Victims Demonstrate Outside German Embassy

60,000 IRANIAN WAR VETERANS FELL VICTIM TO CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Thousands of war veterans wounded in chemical attacks during eight years of the imposed war by the Iraqi regime staged a protest rally outside German Embassy here on Wednesday.



Photo: Abbas Kowsari

The victims of the Iraqi chemical warfare, some of them moving on wheelchairs have lodged complaints with Iranian Justice Department against the German firms supplying Iraq with toxic gas and technology to launch chemical warfare against Iranian soldiers in the course of the Iraqi-imposed war.

They strongly condemned Mykonos Court's biased verdict against the Islamic Republic of Iran saying that by issuing such a baseless verdict, the court has proved that it is a tool in the hands of the United States and the Zionist regime.

The demonstrators further called on Judiciary to take legal action at international level against the German firms supplying chemical and biological agents to Iraq.

The war veterans, bearing white breathing masks, also carried the photos of their fellow combatants who had succumbed to their chemical wounds as well as models of missiles containing toxic gas used by Iraq during the war time.

The effigies of a Berlin court judge who had accused Iran of ordering the assassination of four Kurds in Berlin in 1992, were also seen in the hands of some protestors.

They called on the German government to apologize to Iran for the blunder made by the Berlin Court investigating the so called Mykonos case. A war veteran with 70 percent injuries, Mohebbi told the *Tehran Times* that the demonstrators would prove that the Berlin court's verdict is baseless.

Seyed Abbas Davoodi, a victim of chemical weapons suffering from 45 percent injuries said: "We are here to restore our rights. International community should question the German government for providing Iraq with chemical weapons."

(Contd on Pg. 14)

TEHRAN TIMES

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In the Name of God

They swear to you by Allah that they might please you, and Allah, as well as His Apostle, has a greater right that they should please Him, if they are believers.

(HOLY QORAN) (9:62)

OPINION

Iranian Army Mighty Enough to Defend the Motherland

The Army Day, Farvardin 29, reminds us of unity between people and the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the Shah's rule the army was the personification of the Shah and there was an iron curtain between the army and the people.

However, the three services of the armed forces, the Air Force, Ground Force and the Navy did not hesitate to join hands with Iranian nation while standing against the Shah's tyrannical system.

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution, numerous plots were hatched by enemies to dismantle the nascent Islamic Revolution. But from the morrow of the victory, the three services of the Iranian army stood by the nation in thwarting enemy's plots in Kurdestan, Gonbad and Khuzestan. When Iraq waged a full-fledge war against Iran, the armed forces, shoulder-to-shoulder with Iranian volunteers, defended our motherland against foreign aggressors and the agents of the U.S.

After the Iraqi invasion of Iran in September 1980, the Ground Force was disrupted due to the purge of top generals whose allegiance to Shah was unalterable. Therefore, the Air Force halted further Iraqi penetration for about six months until the Ground Force, the Basijis (volunteers) and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) got prepared and began to launch counter-offensives against the Iraqi aggression.

The operations launched by the Navy practically paralyzed the Iraqi Navy in the first few weeks of the war. The Navy played a decisive role in pushing back the Iraqi troops who had surrounded Abadan. This operation paved the way for greater operations.

The Navy also played a crucial role in the war of tankers as well as guarding Iranian oil tankers, providing them a safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz at the peak of the war of tankers.

Cooperation and coordination between the army and the IRGC was a turning point in the history of war. Not only was Khorramshahr liberated but more than 30,000 Iraqi soldiers were made captives despite the superiority of Iraqi military technology over Iran. Such a cooperation finally led to the liberation of Iranian occupied lands from the clutches of the Iraqi troops.

Attempts for enhancing the Army's combat readiness and its discipline are among the laudable steps taken in the aftermath of the imposed-war.

Ironically, the Iranian army is stronger than the armies of all Persian Gulf countries put together while Iran's defense expenditures are less than any single Persian Gulf state. One explanation might be Iran's relative self-reliance in manufacturing military equipments at home.

Despite its strong might, the Iranian army does not pose any threat to Iran's neighbors, while at the same time, Iran will not allow any country to cast a covetous eye at a single inch of its territory.

Over 5,000 Iraqi Kurdish Children Vaccinated Against Polio

MAHABAD, W. Azarbaijan Province — Some 5,264 Iraqi Kurdish children under five, living at Sardasht and Piranshahr refugee camps, have been vaccinated against polio, it was announced here Wednesday.

Rahim Motezaker, head of Piranshahr health department, added that all Iraqi Kurdish children living inside the Iranian boundaries, have been vaccinated against polio in this stage of the campaign to eradicate the disease.

The primary stages of the project were carried out in these refugee camps under the supervision of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), he said.

More than 12,000 Iraqi Kurdish refugees who fled to Iran in the course of the Persian Gulf war and civil wars in the Iraqi Kurdistan, are living in Sardasht and Piranshahr refugee camps.

(IRNA)

Kharrazi Urges Security Council to Handle Afghan Issue Firmly



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Kamal Kharrazi, on Tuesday called on the Security Council to send a strong message to all warring factions in Afghanistan to cease hostilities immediately.

In a speech to the Security Council Kharrazi emphasized the human dimensions of the tragedy prevailing in Afghanistan, urging all afghan parties to abandon and renounce the use of force, IRNA reported from New York.

He also called on the warring factions to take advantage of mediation efforts by the UN, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the regional states to start an immediate dialog aimed at national reconciliation and political settlement of the conflict leading to the establishment of a broad-based and fully representative government.

He said the people of the war-torn Afghanistan have suffered long and have been subjected to horrors and indignities which are not fully comprehensible to the outside world.

"Afghan people have been condemned to a life of misery while they are engaged in illicit trafficking of arms and narcotics and even in selling the bones and remains of their dead in order to simply sustain their families," Kharrazi said.

This reflection does not mean to be soft on or find justification for criminals and illicit traffickers of arms and narcotics particularly those Afghan factions who reportedly organize and promote such illegal activities in order to finance their military operations.

In fact such activities, particularly narcotic drugs trafficking, are of grave concern to Iran as they put severe strain on the Islamic Republic of Iran in terms of both manpower and financial resources to combat drug traffickers at its borders.

The international community bears not only legal but also moral responsibility to address this tragic situation in an effective manner, he stressed.

The Security Council should ensure that its resolutions are implemented as well as provide humanitarian aid and prepare the ground for reconstruction of Afghanistan as incentives towards a political settlement, Kharrazi told the session.

Kharrazi noted that the political resolution of the Afghan conflict should take into account all segments of the Afghan society.

He said that Tehran fully supports the stance of the UN secretary general that "no one should imagine that a military victory by one party over the others will resolve the Afghan problem in the long run."

The Iranian envoy added that the UN special mission to Afghanistan should be supported and encouraged to expand its contacts with all factions and groups in Afghanistan as well as with its neighbors.

He referred to the efforts by the Islamic Republic of Iran in convening an inter-Afghan meeting in Tehran last January aimed at urging all Afghan factions to abandon hostilities in favor of a constructive dialog for a political settlement.

In conclusion, he said efforts to establish a just and lasting peace in Afghanistan should respect the country's sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and national unity.

Furthermore, these efforts should reject military solution to the problem and halt foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

He also said warring factions should not be provided with weapons, military personnel and advice so that the way will be paved for cessation of hostilities and reconciliation through a process of dialog in which all political and ethnic groups in Afghanistan can participate.

Bangladeshi PM to Visit Tehran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Bangladeshi Foreign Minister, Abdul Samad Azad disclosed on Tuesday that Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina Wajed will pay a visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran in the near future.

He made the remark in a meeting with Iran's Charge d'Affaires to Dhaka, Mohammad Abbaszadeh, an IRNA report said.

Reviewing further promotion of Tehran-Dhaka relations, the two officials underlined the need for more contacts and exchange of delegations between the two countries.

Outlining priorities of Iran's foreign policy, Abbaszadeh termed the recent decision of the European Union as unilateral, illogical and in violation of legal principles.

The verdict of the Berlin court was issued under the pressure of elements outside the court, he noted adding that the court's ruling lacks any legal value.

Russian MP: German Court's Ruling Discriminatory

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The remarks made by the Berlin court against Iran are discriminatory and unjust, Head of the Security Commission of the Russian State Duma, Viktor Ilyokhin, said in Moscow on Tuesday.

Talking with IRNA, he said the ruling was not only against German laws but also against the international norms and the judge of the Berlin court by polluting his mind with petty politics, stamped a seal of infamy on his own forehead.

He said the politically-motivated decision of the Berlin court trampled and violated the basic principles of the judicial system.

Ilyokhin questioned the authority of the German legal system to give decisions against the senior authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Describing the Mykonos trial as a soap opera, he said that it will have no effect on the firm foundation of Irano-Russian bilateral relations.

Also, the Leader of Friday prayer of Moscow Mufti Ravile Einuddin on Tuesday denouncing the Berlin court verdict, said the ruling demonstrated the fact that democracy was in crisis in the West.

Speaking to IRNA in Moscow, he added that the ruling was in violation of international civil laws and has enraged the Iranian nation and annoyed Russian Muslims.

Iranian, Armenian Foreign Ministers Hold Talks

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and his Armenian counterpart Alexander Erzoumanian in Yerevan Wednesday discussed bilateral ties and the latest regional and international developments.

According to IRNA, in the meeting the Armenian foreign minister lauded Iran's role in establishing peace and stability in Tajikistan, Afghanistan and the Caucasus as extremely valuable.

He also appreciated Iran's active role in solving regional problems and in establishing peace and stability in the region including the Caucasus.

He said that in its foreign policy, Yerevan gives special priority to expanding cooperation with Tehran and will make efforts to increase bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation with Iran.

Erzoumanian added that Yerevan is interested in expanding relations in all fields with the Islamic Republic of Iran. He pointed out that Armenia placed importance on continued multilateral cooperation with Iran and Greece and called for increased ties among these three countries.

Velayati said that the Islamic Republic of Iran in its foreign policy emphasizes strengthening of ties with all countries specially with its neighbors.

Stressing the importance of establishment of peace and stability in the Caucasus, Velayati added that Karabakh crisis could be solved through joint efforts of regional countries.

He viewed foreign intervention in the region as detrimental and said this further complicates the crisis in the Caucasus.

Velayati welcomed the expansion of multilateral and bilateral cooperation in the region and said that once successful, it would offer a very good model for other countries to follow.

Velayati arrived in Yerevan Tuesday evening at the head of a political, economical and cultural delegation to participate in the sixth trilateral conference of the foreign ministers of Iran, Armenia and Turkmenistan.

Army's Politico-Ideological Office Commemorates the Army Day

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Head of the Politico-Ideological Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Hojjatoleslam

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Chinese Official Calls For Promotion of Tehran-Beijing Ties

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Chairman of the Foreign Commission of the Chinese National Congress on Wednesday called for enhancement of relations between his country and Iran in political, economic and technical fields.

According to IRNA, the Chinese official made the remark in a meeting with visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Alaeddin Boroujerdi.

He said that common views of Iran and China on international issues especially human rights are beneficial for both countries.

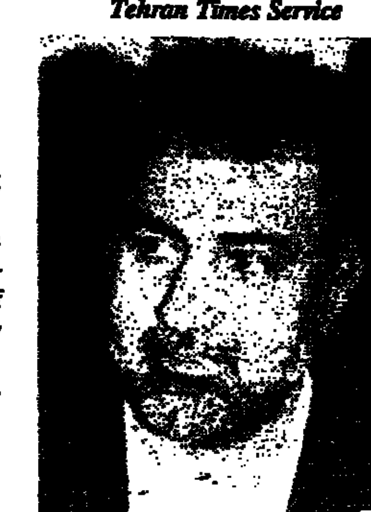
Boroujerdi, who arrived in Beijing on Monday, said that the Islamic Republic will decisively and powerfully stand against any bullying and irrational attitude.

Turning to recent German behavior towards Iran, he said Tehran's reaction towards Bonn has been the most natural reaction of an independent country against an unprincipled conduct of another country.

He added that relations will return to normal with Germany if the country corrects its erroneous conduct and makes up for this blunder.

Najafi Meets Syrian Counterpart

Tehran Times Service



TEHRAN — The visiting Iranian Education Minister Mohammad Ali Najafi met with his Syrian couterpart Ghassan Halabi in Damascus on Tuesday.

According to IRNA, the Iranian minister in the meeting voiced Iran's willingness to exchange experieces with Syria in educational field.

The two sides stressed the necessity of cultural and educational contacts between the two countries.

Najafi, who arrived here Monday night, also inspected the Teacher's Training Center of Syria Tuesday morning.

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Iran-Armenia-Turkmenistan Trilateral Meeting Opens

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — A trilateral meeting between foreign ministers of Iran, Armenia and Turkmenistan opened in Yerevan on Tuesday.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the meeting, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said that cooperation between the three countries should be assessed as a positive instance of trilateral ties for regional development and progress.

He stated that the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran was based upon broadening of economic and cultural cooperation with the countries in the region and that Islamic Republic of Iran gave top priority to such ties.

The Iranian foreign minister believed that such cooperation would help bring peace and stability in the region. He pointed out that such a kind of cooperation did not pose any danger to any other countries and that all countries in the region are free to join the cooperation pact.

Velayati hoped that Russia would join the trilateral meeting.

Turkmenistan Foreign Minister Boris Sheikh-Moradov and Armenian Foreign Minister Arzoumanian also addressed the opening session, laying stress on trilateral cooperation.

The two countries' foreign ministers praised cooperation with Islamic Republic of Iran as vital to the interests of the region.

The Russian Ambassador to Yerevan is attending the trilateral session as an observer.

Armenian President: Cooperation Among Iran, Turkmenistan, Armenia Significant

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Armenian President Leon Ter-Petrosyan on Wednesday called the trilateral cooperation among Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia very constructive and significant.

Petrosyan made the remark at a meeting with foreign ministers of Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia, Ali Akbar Velayati, Boris Sheikhmoradov and Alexander Erzoumanian, on the sidelines of the 6th trilateral meeting of the three countries in Yerevan.

He also noted that since the holding of the trilateral meetings, cooperation among the three countries has expanded and ties have



been further consolidated.

Stressing that Armenia considers no limit to trilateral cooperation, he termd the cooperation between the three countries and other regional organizations such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) very positive.

Underlining the necessity of expansion of ties among the three countries in the field of communications, he called for strengthening of bilateral and trilateral cooperations to help resolve regional crises.

The Iranian foriegn minister, for his part, stressed that trilateral cooperation could serve as a good model for regional cooperation, saying that cooperation among the three countries has reached a constructive level.

He said that deepening of not only such cooperation would help economic prosperity of the countries but will play a great role in settling peace and restoring tranquility to the region.

Greek Party Leader Denouces EU Decision

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — In a meeting with Iranian ambassador to Athens on Tuesday, the leader of the Democratic Social Movement (DIKKI) of Greece, Dimitris Tsovolas, criticized the decision by members of the European Union to recall their ambassadors from Tehran, an Iranian Embassy source told IRNA

The leader of the Greek opposition party also stressed that attempts by some third countries to damage Greek-Iranian relations were doomed to fail.

Tsovolas, whose party has nine members in the 300-member Greek Parliament, expressed support for the decision of the Greek government not to recall its ambassador from the Islamic Republic and stressed that his party backs the expansion of Greek-Iranian ties in all sectors.

Iranian ambassador, Mehdi Khandaqabadi, also discussed Greek-Iranian ties with the head of the Parliamentary Committee of Greek-Iranian Friendship Group, Yiannis Kharalambos.

An Iranian diplomatic source told IRNA that Kharalambos, a deputy of the ruling Pasok Party, also criticized the EU position against Iran and stressed that the strong Greek-Iranian ties cannot be disturbed by third parties.

UN Security Council Holds Special Session to Survey Afghan Situation

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The United Nation Security Council held a special session investigating the developments in Afghanistan in condition when bloody clashes persist in Afghanistan between the Taleban group and the supporters of Borhaneddin Rabbani and while many years of efforts by international organizations have failed to settle the crisis.

It is predicted that the Taleban group, who have currently over two third of Afghanistan soil including Kabul under its occupation, will launch a new wave of attacks to strengthen its presence with the weather growing warm.

The UN plans to hold the second international conference on Wednesday to be attended by 12 countries to launch political efforts aimed to find new ways for establishment of peace in Afghanistan and contribution to national reconstruction in that country.

The conference to be held at the invitation of the UN Secretary General, Kufi Anan, will be attended by five permanent members of the Security Council and the countries neighboring to Afghanistan, including Iran and Pakistan as well as countries to play a part in reconstruction of Afghanistan, such as Italy and Germany.

On the Monday session of the council, first Abd Al-Rahim Ghaforzai, Acting Foreign Minister of Rabbani government devoted a major portion of his speech to the interventions of Islamabad government in Afghanistan and the crimes of Taleban group and said all countries should prevent any intervention in the affairs of Afghanistan.

German Judicial Row Against Iran Doomed to Fail, Says Leading Ayatollah

QOM — Ayatollah Nasser Makarem Shirazi a prominent Ayatollah said here Tuesday that the bandwagon of propaganda scandal ignited by the German judicial branch against the Islamic Republic of Iran is doomed to fail.

The Ayatollah pointed out that the scandal has been raised as a joint conspiracy by the U.S. and Israel in an answer to Islamic Iran's firm opposition to the so-called Middle East peace process between the Arabs and Zionists and the building of Jewish settlements in eastern Qods (Jerusalem).

Ayotallah Makarem Shirazi, who is also the Secretary General of the Qom Seminary (Howzeh), pointed out that the baseless decision of the German court was intended to attract attention towards the Mykonos trial, so that the Zionists could rapidly carry out their satanic plan of building Jewish settlements in Beit al-Moqaddas.

He advised the German government not to be carried away by the pressure tactics of the U.S. and Israel and to approach the matter logically and realistically in view of the ties between Germany and Islamic Iran.

The ayatollah said the Islamic Republic of Iran, like in the past, has the full backing of the nation and will continue to maintain its strong and dignified stance in relation to the Mykonos conspiracy.

Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi finally stated that Islamic Iran's staunch support for the deprived and oppressed peoples of the world has been the cause of the fury and enemity of the Zionists and the U.S

Role of Iran, Russia in Maintaining Regional Peace Important

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Iranian Majlis Speaker Hojjatoleslam Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri said here Wednesday that role of Iran and Russia in maintaining peace and tranquility in the region is very important.

Speaking at the open session of Majlis, the speaker stressed that adopting a common stance by the two countries is necessary for setting regional and international crises.

Nateq Nouri also briefed the audience on the outcome of his visit to Russia, saying that promotion of Tehran-Moscow relations would be to the benefit of the two sides as well as the region.

He said that in his meeting with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Russian official underlined that the Mykonos trial had no imapct on political, economic and trade ties between the two countries and as a sovereign country Iran is capable of resolving its problems.

Referring to Iran-Russia cooperation in completion of Bushehr nuclear power plant, Nateq Nouri said that Russia has expressed readiness to help set up another nuclear power plant in Iran and has stressed that the bullying of Western countries would have no impact on the two countries' ties.

Armed Forces Banned From Interfering in Presidential Campaigns

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Brigadier General Seyed Hasan Firoozabadi in a statement Wednesday warned the armed forces against any intervention in the seventh presidential election campaigns.

The statement said the armed forces are banned from any form of electoral activities such as distribution of leaflets and posters for or against a given candidate.

According to the statment the armed forces are not to frequent the electoral headquarters of the presidential candidates, organize meetings, escort the candidates or providethem with forces, vehicles and places belonging to the armed forces.

WEATHER

The Islamic Republic of Iran Meteorological Organization announced today's weather as follows:

Forecast for Tehran: Max. temp. 25°C, Min. temp. 10°C

Partly cloudy with scattered showers

Warmest Point: Lamard, Iranshahr 33°C

Coldest Point: Daran -3°C

Some cities of the world

Cities	Max °C	Cities	Max °C
Riyadh	34	Vienna	–
Istanbul	–	Moscow	16
Rome	–	Madrid	–
Athens	–	Abu Dhabi	33
London	13	Karachi	30
Paris	–	New Delhi	31
Frankfurt	–	Kuwait	28

Iran, Qatar Discuss Development Projects

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - In a meeting here on Tuesday with Iranian Minister of Construction Jihad Gholamrez Forouzesh, Qatari Ambassador Ali bin Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari emphasized on execution of the two countries' joint economic projects in the areas of fisheries, exchange of experts and creating a green belt in Doha and other Qatari cities.

In his talks, Forouzesh discussed promotion of bilateral cooperation in economic and development affairs, IRNA re-

Exchange of technology and the carrying out of development projects in Qatar by the Islamic Republic of Iran, were also reviewed at the meeting.

Oil Prices Fall as Fears of Over-Supply Reappear

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - World oil prices slipped back on Tuesday, as tension appeared to slacken in Iran's dispute with the European Union and fears grew of worsening oversupply in crude and product markets.

The May futures contract for world benchmark crude Brent blend closed at 17.96 a barrel on London's International Petroleum Exchange (IPE), off sharply from yesterday's final price of 18.19, Reuter said.

Brokers said the market felt there would be no escalation in the dispute between Iran, the world's third largest crude exporter, and the European Union.

Oil brokers said they did not expect the European Union to mimic Washington's blanket ban on trade with Tehran.

The Iran issue has to escalate a lot further before we start to see the oil markets paying too much relevance, one IPE trader said.

As we know, a coordinated European action against Iran is not going to be something that will be easily pulled off, the broker said.

I get the impression that the Iranian situation is already being pushed to the side (in oil markets), he added.

The market was focusing instead on predictions for weekly U.S. stocks data published by the American Petroleum Institute (API) after the market closes on Tuesday.

Prices across the Atlantic were weaker on the expectation the data would show crude oil stocks rising in the U.S. by 3.5 million barrels in the week to April 11.

Such figures would underline how far world crude production currently outstrips demand. The consequence has been a three-month 30 percent slide in price this year.

However, some traders were still optimistic that the recent sharp drop in oil prices could be ,eversed.

Kuwait's Oil Minister, Isa Al-Mazeedi, told a London-based newspaper in an interview that he believed supply would continue high into the second quarter of the year but good demand for gasoline should keep prices steady.

All indications are that the current production glut will continue in the second quarter of the year but because this period sees demand rising for light products...and the industry begins to build stocks, these factors should minimise the impact on prices, Mazeedi told *Sharq al-Awsat* newspaper.

President: Industry Foundation of Development, Progress

Photo: Mojtaba Takin

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said here yesterday that Iran's industries in recent years have not only rescued Iran from excessive importations but have also achieved world respect.

Talking to officials and managers of the Ministry of Industries, the president said that industrial maturity is the foundation of development and progress.

Voicing satisfaction over the growth of the country's industrial sector, the president stressed that such a development does not overshadow the importance of the agricultural sector which, he said, is a measuring gauge of the country's independence.

He spoke of the role of industry in promoting agriculture, citing the country's efficient and principled use of water resources as significant.

Taking all things into consideration, the president said the priority given to the industry sector has been justified.

He said the country's increased production in manufacturing and industrial goods, the certificates received from the international standards organization for its finished products, and consumer satisfaction have all encouraged the export of products, as well as technical and engineering services, abroad.

The president cited the country's cement plants, particularly their design and implementation, as a good example of the state of industrial progress and said is it somehing the country can be proud of.

Seventh Specialized Exhibition of Ceramics, China, Glass Export Opened

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Head of the Iran Export Promotion Center, Ali Saidlou, inaugurated the seventh specialized exhibition of ceramics, china and glass export at the permanent Tehran International Fair Ground yesterday.

Some 196 participants will display the latest artistic and industrial achievements in the area of ceramics, china, and glass on an area of 1,400 square meters.

Luxembourg to Back India on EU Anti-Dumping Duties

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Luxembourg is opposed to the anti-dumping move by the European Union on imports of Indian unbleached textiles.

This was categorically stated in New Delhi by the Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Cooperation of Luxembourg, Georges Wohlfart, yesterday while speaking at the opening of the Trade Office of Luxembourg in India at the International Trade Towers, IRNA reported.

Kuwait Bids Its Time Over Foreign Investment

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Kuwait is inching open the doors to foreign investors, but economists say this oil-rich state is more in need of foreign expertise than capital and progress towards easing restrictions will be slow.

"I think there is a general recognition that foreign investment in the context of the reform process is a good thing," said Sharif Ghalib, chief economist at Kuwait-based Persain Gulf Investment Corporation (PGIC), an AFP dispatch reported.

But, he said, "there is a debate going on as to how quickly, and what sectors, and what the impact is" of opening the doors to overseas investment.

Several recent initiatives suggest a new openness to foreign investors in this Persian Gulf state where overseas shareholders are limited to a 49 percent stake in local firms and the vibrant bourse is mostly closed to foreigners.

A new government committee has been set up to assess ways of attracting foreign investors, parliament is discussing a privatization bill that could allow foreigners a stake in public utilities and there are proposals to reduce the tax burden on foreign companies operating in Kuwait City.

A more concrete example is the two-billion dollar petrochemical complex called equate that is nearing completion, in which Union Carbide of the United States is a 45 percent shareholder.

"To open up the oil sector for the private sector — let alone the foreign private sector — is quite remarkable for Kuwait," commented one Kuwaiti economist.

Kuwait's upstream and downstream oil sector is the top attraction for foreign investors, while opportunities in utilities such as power, water and telecommunications could also be assured of foreign interest.

As for the stock exchange, international fund managers on the look out for new markets have had to watch from the sidelines as share prices rocketed in the past two years and turnover hit a record 19 billion dollars in 1996.

Yet for all the recent talk, foreign investors interested in Kuwait are unlikely to be rewarded quickly because the government is not facing the same financial pressures that have pushed other developing countries to open up.

"The need for foreign investment does not stem from the need for foreign capital; but more from the need for foreign expertise and management," the Kuwaiti economist explained.

Abundant oil reserves have enabled the government to stash away overseas assets now estimated at some 40 billion dollars even after covering the costs of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, while private Kuwaiti capital abroad is estimated at up to 60 billion dollars.

Even a persistent budget deficit has been financed by investment income rather than resorting to borrowing.

As a result, Kuwait's approach to foreign investors "is not like a fire sale" but is moving "gradually, step by-step," the economist added.

The need for foreign expertise is obvious in the equate project, where Union Carbide was chosen mainly for its technology and marketing abilities rather than the cash it could bring into the project.

But other areas which economists said would benefit from the skills and standards foreign investment brings remain shut off.

Foreign involvement in the local bourse might improve professionalism, but as long as local capital can drive shares to new highs the restrictions that allow only Kuwaitis and Persain Gulf Arabs to hold stocks directly are likely to stay.

Oil experts point to the upstream oil sector — the main source of state revenues — as an area where foreigners would bring technology to help meet the government's capacity expansion goals.

But there are few signs that this jealously-guarded national resource will be opened to production-sharing or profit-sharing deals increasingly popular in other Persian Gulf states, and hungry oil majors here are restricted to fee-based service contracts.

Yet whatever the pace, economists said the government must tackle several issues to attract foreigners in the long run, including allowing foreigners to take a controlling interest in local firms, cutting red tape and putting in place laws that give security to foreigners.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

The following table shows the foreign exchange rates in rials as released by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Wednesday, April 16, 1997.

COUNTRY	UNIT	Floating Rates BUY	Floating Rates SELL	Export Rates BUY	Export Rates SELL
Australia	dollar	1,338	1,365	2,331	2,342
Austria	schilling	143	144	246	247
Belgium	(100) francs	4,911	4,939	8,430	8,473
Canada	dollar	1,251	1,258	2,148	2,159
Denmark	krone	265	267	455	457
France	franc	300	302	515	517
Germany	mark	1,008	1,014	1,731	1,739
Holland	guilder	897	902	1,540	1,548
Italy	(100) liras	103	104	176	177
Japan	(100) yen	1,381	1,389	2,371	2,383
Sweden	krone	227	229	391	393
UAE	dirham	476	479	818	820
UK	pound	2,833	2,859	4,880	4,905
U.S.	dollar	1,750	1,755	3,000	3,015

Political Uncertainty in India to Affect Investments

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Leading economists of India have warned of a slowdown in investments flows into India following the fall of the 13 party United Front (UF) coalition government on April 11 and political uncertainty resulting from this.

The political developments have led to an erosion in confidence of the foreign investors in India, particularly at the time when the Indian economy was beginning to look up, IRNA reported from New Delhi.

Investment is still sluggish in the economy and the political uncertainty would further deteriorate the situation, impeding the growth process, said director Research and Information System (RIS) of India, V. Punchmukhi, to newspersons.

He added that whichever political party comes to power shall have to carry on the previous government's investment policy.

Prakash Mohan, Director General of National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) of India, feels that the country has been engulfed with political flux just when things started looking up, particularly on the economic front.

He, however, was optimistic that the Indian economy was robust enough to overcome all such political crises very fast.

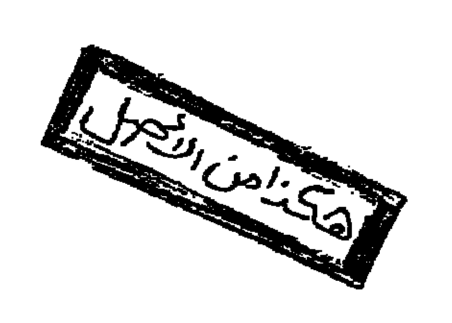
Former governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI), R.N. Malhotra, said that political instability would affect both domestic and foreign investments.

Meanwhile, stock markets in India are likely to remain lull for some time to come as market is apprehensive of any government providing a stable government at the center.

R.H. Patil, Managing Director of National Stock Exchange (NSE) of India, says that every thing will depend on what sort of government would come to power.

Experts feel that alliance among various political parties to come to power was not a solution. Only a stable government after fresh polls can help stock markets in long term.

However, the market did not react sharply to the fall of the Deve Gowda government during the special trading session on Saturday.



SPORTS SUMMARY

Tehran Times Service

FORMULA ONE

Defendants Head and Newey in Court

IMOLA, Italy: Williams officials Patrick head and Adrian Newey were both in court here on Tuesday for the trial into the death of Brazilian Formula One driver Ayrton Senna nearly three years ago.

However neither defendant took the witness stand and were merely listening to prosecution experts explaining the mechanical reasons for the death of Senna on the San Marino track on May 1 1994.

FOOTBALL

Second Champions League Spot Up for Grabs

PARIS: Bastia drew 1-1 with Paris Saint Germain on Tuesday to leave the fight for the second European champions league spot up for grabs with just five games to go for both teams.

Bastia's Slovakian Lubomir Moravcik equalized Patrice Loko's early strike to keep the Corsicans in third spot, two points behind second-placed PSG.

Fifth-placed Strasbourg host fourth-placed Nantes on Wednesday and both are also in the hunt for a champions league berth.

German Part-Timers Beat Bundesliga's Karlsruhe

COTTBUS, Germany: Two goals in three minutes by ex-East Germany's amateurs Energie Cottbus helped them beat 10-man Karlsruhe 3-0 on Tuesday to book a place in next month's German cup final.

Played in atrocious weather conditions, with much of the play whited out during the opening 15 minutes by a heavy snow shower, Cottbus had Karlsruhe's measure from the outset.

Rangers Need Just One Point for Ninth Consecutive Title

GLASGOW: Glasgow Rangers need just one point from their last three matches to be certain of their ninth consecutive title following their 6-0 destruction of Raith on Tuesday.

A crushing 6-0 win over the managerless Kirkcaldy outfit at Stark's Park confirmed Raith's relegation and sealed the title for Rangers in everything except mathematics.

Robson Fed Up With Criticism

BARCELONA, Spain: Barcelona Coach Bobby Robson on Tuesday said he was fed up with all the criticism being fired at him since replacing Dutch coach Johan Cruyff at the beginning of the season.

Barcelona lie second in the Spanish championship and have the best attack in Europe with 85 goals in 33 matches.

Yet Robson has consistently been the target of criticism over defensive tactics.

Weah Writes Off Milan's Season

MILAN: AC Milan striker George Weah said Tuesday that Italy's ailing champions just have to accept they're having a bad year and try to put everything right next season.

Milan, currently 12th in the table after conceding nine goals in their last two matches against Juventus and Inter, have been left clinging to their hopes of a UEFA Cup slot next season.

Bosnich Still Has Future at Aston Villa

LONDON: Aston Villa manager Brian Little has resisted the temptation to transfer-list Mark Bosnich after his weekend walkout but the goalkeeper will be hit in the pocket and remain out of the side.

Little has fined Bosnich two weeks wages — around 10,000 pounds (16,000 dollars) — and confirmed he will not recall him as originally planned for Saturday's home clash with Tottenham.

RALLYING

Makinen Leads Catalunya Rally

LLORET DE MAR, Spain: Finland's world champion Tommi Makinen took top spot in his Mitsubishi following the 681km second leg of the Catalunya rally on Tuesday.

Makinen replaced the Subaru of overnight leader Colin McRae of Scotland at the top of the leader board although he has the same time as McRae's Italian teammate Piero Liatti.

But organizers explained Makinen leads because in the day's last special, he was one second quicker than Liatti.

CRICKET

Lewis in Record Books

LONDON: Durham's Jonathan Lewis became only the second ever batsman to score a first-class century on debuts for two different counties on Tuesday's opening day of the English cricket season.

Lewis hit 210 not out as Durham declared on 353 for two against Oxford University at the parks with the students limping to 36 for six in response.

In 1994, Lewis stroked 116 not out for Essex against Surrey at the oval and now joins Peter Bowler in the record books for scoring debut hundreds for two sides.

Smith Wants England Place Back

LONDON: Hampshire batsman Robin Smith is determined to force his way back into the England side for this summer's ashes series against Australia.

Smith's test career was sidelined 14 months ago by the former chairman of selectors Ray Illingworth after the winter tour to South Africa.

But now Smith aims to impress Illingworth's successor David Graveney and the new selection panel which includes two of his former England colleagues Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting.

HEAD COACH OF NATIONAL SOCCER TEAM:

No Discrimination in Selection



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Mohammad Mayeli-Kohan, head coach of Iran's national soccer team, returning from Kuwait participated in an interview and said, "The players in particular the young proved in the friendly match with Kuwait that they enjoy self-confidence.

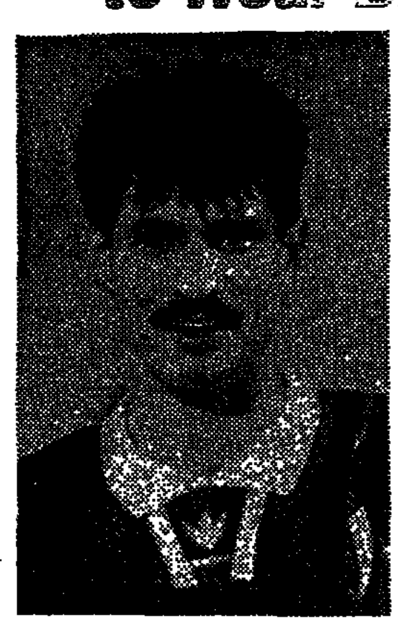
"We will give opportunity to the qualified young players and all of the players are equal to us."

He added that ninety percent of the national team lineup were our young players some of whom wore the national team shirt for the first time. Yet, they apart from the promising result played their roles very well.

When asked about Iran's rivals in the first round of the World Cup qualifying matches, Mayeli-Kohan replied, "We do not know much about Kyrgyzstan but Syria is completely known to us and also we have provided the videotape of the most recent matches of Kuwait."

Talking about the goalie Nima Nakissa, he explained that if he considers the disciplinary issues, he will be invited.

Ali Daei, Karim Bagheri to Wear Blue Shirts



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Ali Daei and Karim Bagheri, two perfect Iranian football players who were in Germany to sign a contract with one of German teams finally managed to reach an agreement with Armina Bilfield, a team of German Bundesliga *first division.*

The two-year contract immediately starts after qualifying matches of 1998 World Cup in the Asian Group 2. "Karim and I underwent some medical tests successfully," Ali Daei said, "I have received no money for the contract and I will be paid monthly."

Although Armina Bilfield has a long history in football, it is not a well-known club in Europe. It has not gained a single honor during its 92 years of existence. Being coached by Ernest Midrope, the club is standing fourteenth now in the table.

Bilfield wearing blue and white shirts, white shorts and blue socks owns a private stadium. Bilfield is a city three hours from Hamburg which is populated with 500,000.

One question, however, remains unanswered. How come Ali Daei signed a contract with Armina Bilfield where some famous clubs like Hamburg, Kaiserslautern, Munich 1860 and Dortmund showed their interest to attract him?!

Iran to Host the World Armies Soccer Competitions

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Colonel Ashgar Majd-Abadi, head of Physical Education of Islamic Republic of Iran Ground Forces (IRIGF), in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times said, "Iran will host the World Armies Soccer Competitions to be held in June."

He added that the Army of I.R. of Iran ranked second in last year's contests held in Syria.

Majd-Abadi went on to say that the wrestling team of IRIGF would participate in the competitions which are to be held in Syria.

Asked about the 5th Army's Cultural and Sport Festival which is in progress, head of Physical Education of IRIGF replied, "The Islamic countries will participate in this festival next year. Meanwhile, we are considering to hold *the cultural and sport festival at* international level in the future."

He also explained that the ground has been prepared for three Islamic sports including shooting, swimming and riding in the next year's contests.

At the end Majd-Abadi referred to the construction of cultural and sports complexes and said, "The biggest cultural and sports complex of the army will be built in Tehran 'J Garrison' by the end of the current year.

Understanding Kung Fu as Described by a Master

By Ja'far Qasempour Jahangir

Skills of Kung Fu

(Part 35)



Feet in footwork which is like a ship in a turbulent sea move in different directions and enable you to prevent your rival from blowing. Using the footwork, you can be in different directions, sometimes on the left side of the opponent, sometimes on the *right side and sometimes opposite your* rival. Hence, he is not able to strike a blow on you. The power of sight is an important principle in fighting. You can defend against your opponent's blows or dodge if you enjoy good sight. Also, you can strike determining blow on your opponent's susceptible part. As mentioned before, you may learn it (blowing on susceptible parts of the rival's body) by using punching bag. *You should also avoid unnecessary blows since you will be* exhausted if the match continues. So, you have to strike effective blows. For instance, try to minimize the unnecessary blows and strike one effective blow instead of ten futile ones. In summary, fighting should derive from your feeling. To confuse the opponent, you have to apply your own method and in this way spoil his defensive position. Of course, the assessment of an amateur challenger due to his irregular movements can be difficult. He may defend earlier than the expected time or even may hold your arm. In this regard, you should be patient and use just



simple or direct offensive techniques as soon as you find the *chance, i.e. you have to avoid complicated attacks. Since an* amateur's attack has an irregular rhythm, it may deceive even the most skillful challengers. In this case, try to distance yourself from him and let him come toward you. A good challenger never applies the same method in different fights. He gives variety to his techniques through using simple and complicated defensives attacks and movements. He also changes his position and *distance according to the skills. As some rules say,* "Do not use complicated techniques unless you are in urgent need of them. So, you have to use the simple movements and in case they cannot be effective, you should apply the complicated techniques.

Chemical Weapon Victims Demonstrate Outside German Embassy


Photo: Abbas Kowsari

(Contd From Pg. 1)

An official of Mostazafan and Janbazan Foundation announced here Wednesday that 60,000 Iranian war veterans were wounded as a result of the application of chemical warfare by Iraq during the eight years of imposed war.

Head of Public Relations Office of the foundation's Department for Disabled, Parviz Karami, attending the rallies held by war veterans in front of the German Embassy, added that the veterans have been suffering from their injuries.

Most of the wounded have been sent to the European countries for medical treatment and others have been under care inside the country, he added.

Arafat and Levy Pledge to Resume Peace Talks

VALLETTA — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat met Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy here on Wednesday for talks that were hailed as a "first step" towards getting the derailed Middle East peace process back on track.

The meeting, on the sidelines of the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, was the first time Arafat had met any senior Israeli since work began on the construction of new Jewish housing in disputed East Bait-ul-Moqaddas on March 18, straining the peace process breaking point.

It also came just ahead of U. S. Envoy Dennis Ross's arrival in Israel as part of a new push by Washington to get both sides talking to one another again.

Palestinian Spokesman Marwan Kanafani described the meeting as a warm meeting between Arafat and Levy.

"Nothing of substance was discussed but we consider this as a positive step, as a goodwill step," he said. There had been an "exchange of ideas and a recommitment to the peace process," he said.

"Of course we have not resolved all the problems," Levy said. "We will have to continue to work to overcome the difficulties but the wish and will is mutual."

Levy and Arafat were never alone throughout the meeting, which was also attended by Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van Mierlo, Egypt's Amr Mussa, France Herve de Charette and Palestinian Minister for International Cooperation Nabil Shaath.

Van Mierlo left after 20 minutes and the others continued chatting for another 40 minutes. "We did not expect anything concrete from this meeting," said Van Mierlo, who had led efforts to ensure it took place.

"But it is a first step and I am very happy."

Israel's move to begin construction in East Bait-ul-Moqaddas has unleashed a wave of violent protests in the Palestinian territories and prompted Arab states to freeze the normalization of their ties with the Jewish state and restore their traditional economic boycott.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has refused to bow to intense international pressure to stop the settlement, insisting that East Bait-ul-Moqaddas is an integral part of its national capital. Levy reiterated here that Israel did not regard the city's status as negotiable.

The Palestinians see the Arab part of the city as their capital in a future independent state and have denounced what they see as Netanyahu's abandoning of the principle of "land for peace" that underpinned the Oslo peace accords.

(AFP)

UN Human Rights Commission Condemns Rights Abuse in Iraq

GENEVA — The UN human rights commission on Wednesday slammed "massive and extremely grave" human rights abuses in Iraq and called on Baghdad to distribute goods bought under a new oil-for-food deal fairly.

In a resolution approved by 31 of the 53 member countries, the commission said rights abuses in Iraq resulted in an "all-pervasive repression and oppression sustained by broad-based discrimination and widespread terror."

It pointed in particular to summary and arbitrary executions and "widespread systematic torture in its most cruel forms."

It called on the government to "ensure equitable distribution without discrimination to the Iraqi population of the humanitarian supplies purchased with the proceeds of Iraqi oil."

The UN imposed sanctions on Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. However, under UN Resolution 986 which came into force in December, Baghdad is allowed to export $2.2 billion worth of oil every six months -in order to buy essential food and medicine.

The UN commission called on Iraq to "release immediately all Kuwaitis and nationals of other states who may still be held in detention" following the end of the Persian Gulf war and to "establish the whereabouts and resolve the fate of the remaining several hundred missing persons."

It also demanded that Baghdad "cease immediately its repressive practices aimed at the Iraqi Kurds in the north" as well as those in southern marsh regions where it said drainage projects had "provoked environmental destruction and a deterioration of the situation of the civilian population."

(AFP)

Arab League Slams Israel on Qana Massacre Anniversary

CAIRO — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdel Meguid on Wednesday denounced Israel's occupation of a border strip in South Lebanon, on the first anniversary of the Qana massacre.

He urged the UN Security Council to force Israel to pull out, in a statement to mark the deaths of 105 civilians at a UN refugee camp in Qana, South Lebanon, in an Israeli artillery attack last April 18.

The killings took place during Israel's "grapes of wrath" operation against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

(AFP)

Syria Warns of Peace Process Threat to Euromed Partnership

VALLETTA — Syria warned Wednesday that a collapse of the Middle East peace process will scupper attempts to construct long-term economic, political and security ties between Europe and the Mediterranean.

A Euro-Mediterranean partnership launched in Barcelona in 1995 was underpinned by moves towards a lasting Arab-Israeli peace, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara told a conference of 27 countries here.

"It is neither realistic or objective to talk about political or security objectives if we ignore the fate of the peace process, the collapse of which may well lead to the collapse of the Barcelona process," Shara said.

Shara also issued a warning that Israel's current attitude to the peace process could only lead "to an increase in tension and extremism and weaken peaceful inclinations in the region."

The peace process had to be got back on track "before the region starts witnessing other approaches fraught with danger," he warned.

Damascus has stressed its adherence to "land for peace," he said, and wanted "to build on what was already achieved."

Syria insists that it will not resume negotiations with Israel unless it first agrees to return the entire Golan Heights, which the Jewish state captured in the 1967 Middle East war.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres broke off the talks in February 1996 in order to concentrate on May elections in which he was defeated by Benjamin Netanyahu.

Since then, the Israeli government "has rejected the principle of land for peace, backing away from commitments that had been reached," Shara said.

Arab-Israeli ties have deteriorated sharply since Israel began work on a Jewish housing project in disputed East Bait-ul-Moqaddas on March 18.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 1)

IRAN...

Muslims seeking answers about all aspects of their religion, he added.

The center will bring together scholars and teachers from the academia, as well as the seminaries and will try to focus on questions Muslims face in the everyday lives, and will try to provide comprehensive and logical answers to any question posed by Muslims worldwide.

He also said that a congress focusing on the role of religious leadership in the unity of Muslims will be also planned for the near future. "We have already taken the preliminary steps with the help of seminary scholars and professors from our universities," He added.

Dr. Mahfouzi who is also member of the Public Culture Council further elaborated on the role of institute and said that the primary focus of the center will be to support scholars and conduct exhaustive research on the goals and ideals of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He also talked about the incalculable sacrifices of the sacred defense years by millions who gave all in fighting tyranny and evil, and said that although we won the battles and triumphed in the trenches and the fronts, we seem to still lag behind the ideals we have set ourselves when faced with the history of the war academically and ideologically.

"With the help of our researchers and scholars we intend and hope to remedy this soon," He added.

(Contd From Pg. 1)

250...

"The number of Indian people who died so far is maybe around 150," said the official, adding that pilgrims from Pakistan, Thailand, and Bangladesh were also among the victims' of Tuesday's blaze.

The last official Saudi toll put the number of dead at 217 and the injured at 1,290.

The fire ripped through 70,000 tents at Mina erected by pilgrims performing the annual Muslim pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, home of Islam's holiest shrines.

(AFP)

(Contd From Pg. 2)

ARMY'S...

Gholamreza Safaei, released a statement, felicitating the nation on the occasion of the Army Day on Friday April 18.

Part of the statement reads that the leader of the righteous ones, the late Imam Khomeini, proclaimed the bonds of fraternity between the nation and the proud army by declaring April 18 as the Army Day at the dawn of the blessed Islamic revolution.

The statement said the Army Day is the day of affirming solidarity and gratitude of the supports and sacrifices of the nation, day of asserting allegiance to the late Imam Khomeini and day of swearing allegiance with the leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

(Contd from Pg.7)

FRESH...

well as to work against heart disease, Shibamoto said.

Shibamoto said these healthful antioxidants can be found in both regular and decaffeinated coffees. The antioxidant level in the aroma of one cup of coffee would be equivalent to three oranges, his tests showed.

To benefit from these chemicals, the coffee must be both smelled and consumed during the first 10 minutes after brewing and pouring, Shibamoto said.

If you leave the coffee sitting for too long, the chemicals will be lost, he said.

Shibamoto cautioned coffee drinkers against increasing their consumption of coffee based on the results of his study, saying further research was needed.

Shibamoto's findings, presented recently at the American Chemical Society conference in San Francisco, were based on test-tube studies of coffee's compounds. He said the next step would be tests on animals.

(Reuter)

(Contd From Pg. 9)

UK...

apart from those at the meeting who vowed to vote Conservative. Many said they had yet to make up their minds.

At the cattle market in nearby Helston, farmers discussed grimly what should be done with hapless Agriculture Minister Douglas Hogg, widely blamed for mishandling a crisis over mad cow disease which helped force down meat prices.

That bloody hogg — you want to put him in his bloody hat and float him down the thames. He's cost us thousand of pounds, shouted one cattle man. I've never seen such a balls-up by the politicians. It makes me sick.

Fellow farmer Doug Palser was in more relaxed mood but said the Conservatives had no chance in St Ives. Over the last 18 years they've done well but they've gone to sleep. It's time for a change, he said.

EU Policy Has Hit Fishing Industry Hard

Another traditional Conservative bulwark is Newlyn, one of England's busiest fishing ports.

But Trawlermen complain the government has failed to push through changes to the EU's common fisheries policy, which they say encourages other nations to take British fish stocks.

At the end, despite all the fine words, nothing is ever done which makes any difference, said Mike Townsend, head of the Cornish Fish Producers' Association.

It is no coincidence that the local referendum party candidate is Mick Faulkner, who has Trawled these waters for 17 years and says Newlyn's 3,000 fishermen will vote for him.

All good news for George as he starts canvassing for votes, but his smiles turn to scowls when a minibus equipped with loudspeakers suddenly appears on the same street to campaign noisily for the main opposition Labour Party.

We have labour campaigning very hard to elect a Conservative. No sane person can figure out why they're doing this, George said testily, reflecting fears that Labour could split the opposition vote and let the Conservatives back in.

The man inside the bus, Labour candidate Chris Fegan, is surprisingly confident given that he has to gain 15,000 extra votes to stand any charge of winning the seat. But he says Labour, tipped to win the national election, is unstoppable.

We see Labour's policy of introducing a minimum wage as the answer to Cornwall's problems. There are people working on piece rates on farms and coming away with 10 pounds (16) at the end of the day, he said.

(Reuter)

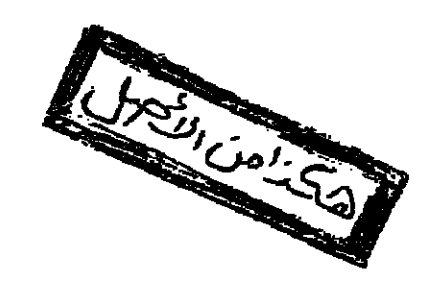
(Contd from Pg. 12)

URUMIEH .....

ing between 13 and 30 years.

West Azarbaijan, bordering some three countries, is on the target of cultural invasion.

Creation of the houses for the youth may do well toward highlighting the cultural awareness of the young generation. Other houses, however, should be established in different border cities of the province — and similarly in all border provinces — to work on the young strata, to cope with the cultural invasion, and picture bright future for the young generation.



More Gloom in Hong Kong Ahead of Handover

HONG KONG — Fewer people are looking forward to Hong Kong's return to China, although there is overall optimism about the territory's economic future, a poll showed here Tuesday.

Fifty-seven percent of the 586 people polled said they would feel happy on June 30 when Britain hands back the territory after more than 150 years of British rule.

It was a fall of nine percent compared with the results of a February poll, and was the first drop since August last year, the survey said.

The survey comes amid a row over a decision by the incoming government to amend bills on civil liberties which would ban political parties from seeking donations from abroad as well as permission to hold demonstrations.

The Asian commercial Research Ltd.'s survey, commissioned by the South China Morning Post, said the number of people saddened by the transition rose from 11 to 17 percent.

However, respondents were more optimistic about Hong Kong's economic future, with 77.9% believing it will be good, with only 14.4% feeling gloomy.

Just under 48 percent felt confident about political freedoms in the next 12 months, while almost 44 percent were not confident.

(AFP)

Previous Disasters to Hit the Pilgrimage to Mecca



SUBAI — The huge fire that swept through pilgrims' tents near the holy Saudi city of Mecca on Tuesday, killing 217 people by official count, is just the latest in a long line of recent tragedies at the annual Muslim pilgrimage.

- *May 1995:* Three pilgrims died, 99 injured in a fire at a camp near Mina

- *May 1994:* A total of 270 pilgrims were killed when crowds surged forward uncontrollably during the "stoning of Satan" ceremony at Mina. The authorities blame the record numbers of pilgrims attending the Hajj.

- *July 1990:* A massive crush in the Mina tunnel, which leads pilgrims up to the holy sites of Mount Arafat, causes 1,426 mostly Asian pilgrims to die from asphyxiation. The authorities said the tunnel's ventilation system broke down.

- *July 1989:* A double bomb attack killed one person and wounded 16 others. Sixteen Shia Muslims from Kuwait were convicted of carrying out the attacks and executed two months later.

- *July 1989:* Eight days after the bomb attack, five Pakistani pilgrims were killed and 34 injured in a fire in their camp.

- *July 1987:* Saudi security forces clash with Iranian pilgrims holding demonstrations against Israel and the United States.

- *Nov 1979:* Several hundred armed men hostile to the Saudi government barricaded themselves inside Mecca's great mosque for two weeks, taking pilgrims hostage. The building is stormed with the help of French commandos sent by Paris at Riyadh's request. An official toll put the dead at 153, with 560 wounded.

(AFP)

Runners Under Starter's Orders for Indian PM Job After Crisis Ends

NEW DELHI — Leading candidates bidding to replace H. D. Deve Gowda as India's prime minister came under starter's orders after the country's political crisis blew over.

A series of names were being touted just hours after the Congress (I) Party confirmed it would support a new coalition led by the United Front multi-party alliance in order to avoid fresh general elections.

The Congress peace declaration late Monday came after H. D. Deve Gowda, deposed as prime minister in a confidence vote last week, agreed to stand down as United Front leader.

G. K. Moopanar, the leader of a Tamil regional party in the 13-party center-left front, has emerged as the front-runner for the prime minister's job, according to a source within the alliance.

N. Chandrababu Naidu, who also leads a regional party and is chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, was also named as a contender.

Both figured prominently in media reports Tuesday speculating over the change of leadership, which the United Front says will take place on April 20.

The Congress, which engineered the downfall of the United Front minority coalition after backing it for 10 months, had told its former ally it would only renew its backing if Deve Gowda went.

Congress spokesman Ved Prakash told AFP that "the political crisis has ended", adding: "they (United Front) are at liberty to choose any leader who can carry out efficiently various programs, such as to fight poverty and see that secular forces are strengthened.

"We will not interfere in the process of selecting a new leader." But he added: "They know why the previous leader failed. They should look deep into their own house and choose an efficient leader."

The rapid reconciliation between the two sides stems from their mutual fear of fresh general elections, only 11 months after previous polls left a hung Parliament.

Both fear elections would strengthen the Hindu nationalists, the third major power bloc in Parliament and who they accuse of religious intolerance.

The initial pact last year by the United Front and the Congress was drawn up to keep the nationalists, the largest single party in Parliament, out of power.

Prakash said Congress was committed to help form "a proper, strong and stable government" and said it wanted "to ensure that the coordination gap which existed before is bridged so as to forge a better understanding between the Congress and the United Front."

On Monday, after a meeting of the party's think tank, a Congress statement called on "everyone to forget the acrimony of the recent past" and called for a new boost to "the battle of combatting communalism."

How long a new front-Congress coaltion can last, however, has been questioned by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party).

It argues that the Congress withdrawal of support to the front government on March 30 was prompted not by an attempt to get rid of Deve Gowda, but to form its own government.

It backed down after the front's parties refused to regroup behind Congress, the BJP says, but still hankers after power.

BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee said Monday President Shankar Dayal Sharma should not allow a carbon-copy front coalition with Congress backing to be reinstalled.

"It will be the greatest mockery of the nation," he said. "There is no guarantee how long such a combination would last."

(AFP)

Honduras Faces Elections in Disarray

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Just as its neighbors are emerging from years of war and economic turmoil, Honduras, long one of the more stable countries of Central America, is facing this November's presidential elections in a state of disarray.

Economic stagnation has brought a wave of crime and social unrest to Honduras in President Carlos Roberto Reina's last year in office. Analysts say his attempts to modernize a country once considered the quintessential banana republic have gone awry.

Reina swept into office in 1994 pledging to curb the power of the military, sweep out corruption and introduce a government with a human face. The Honduran military received millions of dollars in U.S. aid during the 1980s as Washington sought to quell the spread of communism from neigboring Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala.

Reina, watching political extremism diminish in the region, took the chance to cap the military's might, slashing troop numbers and stripping generals of privileges. But popular support for his stance against generals, who have wielded tremendous power throughout the country's history, has been eclipsed by his failure to bring prosperity to the second poorest nation in Latin America after Haiti.

A CID-Gallup poll in December said 54 percent of Hondurans rated his government very bad because of their economic plight. Since then, the slide has been even more pronounced.

Strikes and marches have forced Reina to backtrack on adjustment policies aimed at reducing the fiscal deficit. In one notable climbdown, the government caved in and awarded salary hikes to striking health workers in February.

Fuelling even more loss of popular support for Reina, analysts say, is a crime wave that has mushroomed partly because of the country's economic woes. Murders, robberies, kidnappings and mysterious political killings that have many fearing a resurgence of death squad activities have soared this year, according to analysts.

The government's attempts to shrug off the crime wave as no worse than anywhere else in Central America have only served to deepen anger and frustrations. In a nation that was spared much of the region's revolutionary bloodshed in the 1980s, some of the crimes have had dark political undertones.

Five U.S. fast-food outlets were bombed in San Pedro Sula, Honduras' sweltering second city, in February, a day before a huge series of marches by left-wing unions. No one was killed.

In January, a bomb was defused just in time to keep it from blowing the roof off the Tegucigalpa complaints office of the state electricity company. Energy rates were hiked 25 percent on the day of the foiled attack.

Unions have organized widespread strikes to protest the economic decay, accusing Reina of acting as an agent of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with his austerity policies.

But even the IMF is not totally behind Reina's government.

Deep Budget Cuts Still Fall Short

In March, government ministers announced deep public budget cuts to win new credits from the IMF but the so-called monitored accord fell short of expectations. Facing a social backlash if it reined in public spending any further, the government was able to aim only for a 3.5 percent budget deficit in 1997, higher than the 3.4 percent the previous year and well above the 2.0 percent the IMF had sought.

As a consequence, the IMF offered to loan the country only 120 million to 140 million this year, short of the 200 million it had planned to lend. The loans are crucial considering Honduras' entire operating budget is just 994 million.

Reina's efforts to cut the budget deficit have failed to curb inflation. Annualized prices through February rose 26.8 percent, up from 21.4 percent in the previous 12-month period.

Economic growth was 3.5 percent in 1996, short of the government's four percent target and no improvement on 1995.

With jobs scarce and prices of basic goods such as rice and beans rising, housewives have taken to the streets in protest and Hondurans have taken matters into their own hands.

Armed robbers have gunned down employers to grab workers' paychecks and bank robberies have ballooned.

Fighting the rising tide of lawlessness, a mob in the village of San Jose, 120 miles (190 km) northwest of Tegucigalpa, clubbed to death three brothers who were well-known local thieves last month. The mob then turned its machetes on the robbers' mother, hacking her to pieces. No one was arrested.

Backtrack on Military Powers

Another Reina backtrack has been his on-again, off-again efforts to dilute military powers. Analysts say he rowed back on some of his policies to offset his increasing isolation.

After slashing the size of the army by introducing a flawed scheme to encourage volunteers, he permitted a return of paid recruitment this year.

In three months, army numbers have jumped around 3,000 to some 11,000, analysts say. But he has not yet achieved a total reconciliation with the generals, still the guardians of law and order in Honduras even after civilian rule began in 1980.

Along with slashing troop numbers, Reina took away the military's control of some vital economic interests such as the Honduran telephone company Hondutel, the only profitable state-owned company. The military were nonplused and their grievances have been heard by the opposition National Party.

Nora Gunera, presidential candidate of the National Party, said she would rely on the army and the police force it controls to keep her pledge to combat rising crime, social upheavals and endemic corruption.

Only strong armed forces can tackle these problems, she told Reuters. Generals know she comes to them as a firm ally.

Gunera is the widow of former strongman Gen. Juan Alberto Melgar Castro, the country's de facto ruler from 1975 to 1978.

(Reuter)

Kemp Already Eyeing 2000 Presidential Bid

WASHINGTON — Just when voters thought they had put the U.S. presidential election behind them, the run for 2000 is already rearing its head.

Jack Kemp, the Republican Party's 1996 vice presidential candidate, is wasting no time in laying the groundwork for a presidential bid in 2000.

Kemp heads to the midwest state of Iowa — site of the first presidential caucuses in the spring of 2000 — for a speaking engagement, he told CNN.

"This is the third time I've been to Iowa. I plan to go back," he said, noting that "I've got a lot of friends in Iowa and New Hampshire."

Iowa's Caucuses represent the first political event of the presidential election in 2000. New Hampshire is the site of the country's first primary elections in that year.

"Look, I learned a lot in '96," said Kemp, who was on the losing Republican ticket with Presidential Candidate Bob Dole last year.

"It was a great experience. It whetted my appetite. I want to be a part of the struggle for the heart and soul of the Republican Party." (AFP)

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Tank Rescues Pregnant Greek Woman

KOMOTINI, Greece — The Greek army sent a tank to a snow-bound mountain village in the northeast to take a pregnant woman to hospital to give birth, a local source said Wednesday.

The mayor of the small village of Kechros asked the district governor for help in transporting the 29-year-old woman, Aisse Kelesmehmet, who gave birth to a boy, her fourth child, in the hospital in Komotini.

Kelesmehmet is a member of a minority Muslim community of Bulgarian origin, the source added. (AFP)

Taiwan to Build World's Tallest Iron Tower

TAIPEI — An iron tower measuring 550 meters (1,815 feet) in height would be built in Taipei or in the southern city of Kaohsiung.

It would be nine meters (nearly 30 feet) higher than the CN Tower in Toronto, Canada.

The Tokyo Tower stands 333 meters (1099 feet) and the Eiffel Tower in Paris stands 300 meters (990 feet). (AFP)

Rebel Leader Arrives in S.Africa for Talks With Mandela

CAPE TOWN — Zairean rebel leader Laurent Kabila arrived in South Africa on Wednesday for talks with President Nelson Mandela, giving new impetus to efforts to end the civil war in Zaire.

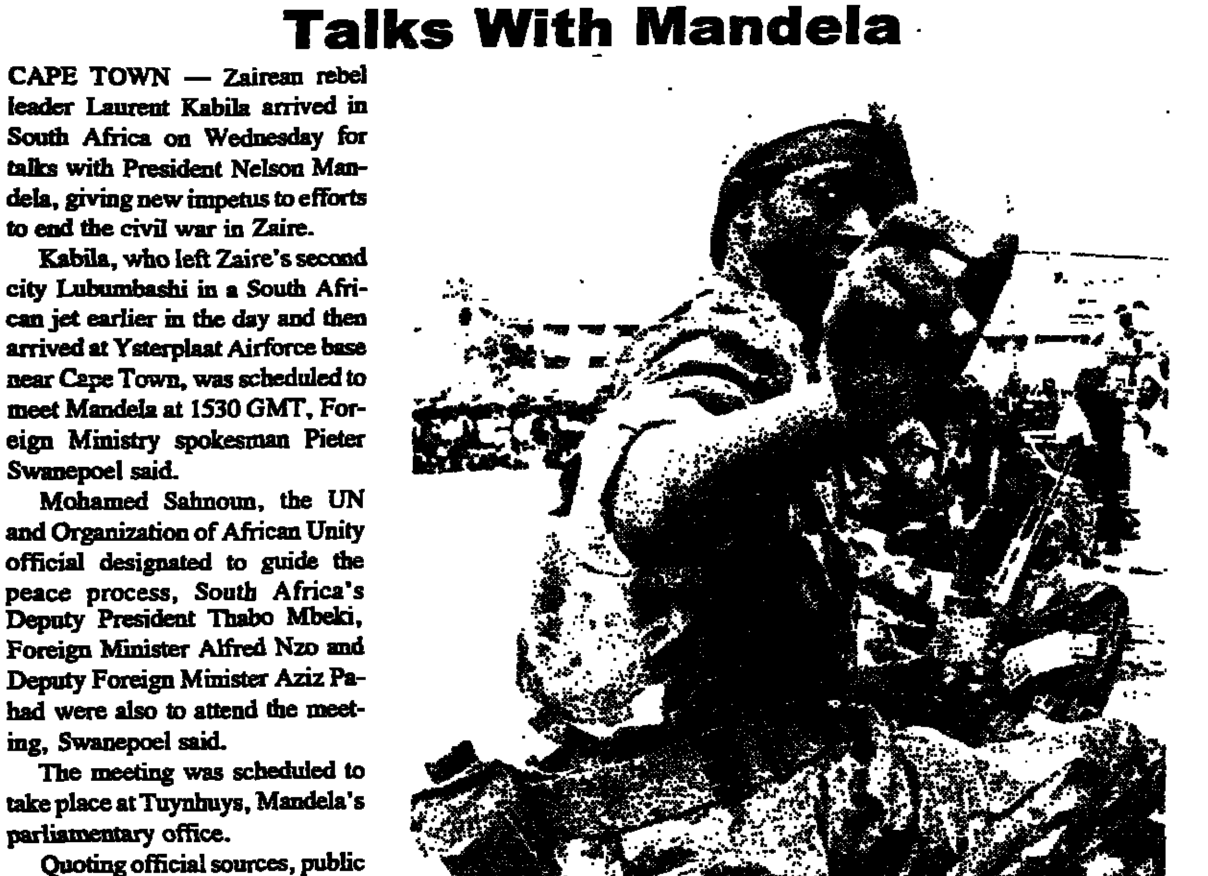
Kabila, who left Zaire's second city Lubumbashi in a South African jet earlier in the day and then arrived at Ysterplaat Airforce base near Cape Town, was scheduled to meet Mandela at 1530 GMT, Foreign Ministry spokesman Pieter Swanepoel said.

Mohamed Sahnoun, the UN and Organization of African Unity official designated to guide the peace process, South Africa's Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo and Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad were also to attend the meeting, Swanepoel said.

The meeting was scheduled to take place at Tuynhuys, Mandela's parliamentary office.

Quoting official sources, public radio said that Mandela is meeting Kabila in the hope of setting up a meeting in South Africa between the rebel leader and Zaire's ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Other sources told AFP that if such a meeting were to take place, it would almost definitely take place in South Africa. (AFP)



LUBUMBASHI, Zaire (April 15): A soldier of rebel leader Laurent Desire Kabila's troops gestures in Lubumbashi. Kabila triumphantly entered Zaire's second city April 14 while security forces loyal to President Mobutu Sese Seko opened fire in Kinshasa to disperse protesters as an opposition stay-at-home strike brought the capital to a standstill. Kabila was expected to fly early April 15 into South Africa from Lubumbashi.

(AFP PHOTO)

Niger Aircraft Kills All 13 on Board

NIAMEY — A military aircraft crashed early Wednesday just outside the airport of Niger's capital Niamey, killing all 13 people on board, the armed forces said here.

Rescue workers told AFP that most of the six passengers and seven crew were burnt to death and that one passenger was decapitated as he was thrown out of the plane.

Those on board the doomed flight, which crashed at about 5:00 a.m. (0400 GMT) close to Soreye village on the eastern outskirts of the city, included presidential envoys.

Earlier on Wednesday, national radio gave the number of dead as nine.

The victims were buried later in the day.

The cause of the accident, which aeronautical sources said was the first involving a Niger army aircraft since independence in 1960, is not yet clear. (AFP)

Aid for Albania Unloaded as Vranitzky Meets Leaders

TIRANA — Food aid for Albania was unloaded Wednesday at the country's main port as the international mediator for the troubled country, Franz Vranitzky, met with senior government officials in the capital.

Flour, beans and vegetable oil were unloaded from a ship in the port of Durres which is being safeguarded by French troops who landed in the impoverished Balkan country on Tuesday.

The food aid, from the UN World Food Program, is to be distributed in the coming days.

The French troops are part of a 6,000-strong multinational security force for Albania, whose job is to guard the port and other strategic sites in Albania to enable much-needed aid to reach its target.

Vranitzky, who heads the mission to Albania of the Organization for Security and Cooperation for Europe (OSCE), held meetings with Prime Minister Bashkim Fino and other ministers Wednesday morning.

He later met with leaders of Albania's political parties who are represented in the country's temporary government of reconciliation. (AFP)

Earthquake Rocks Northwest China

HONG KONG — A strong earthquake estimated at 5.8 on the Richter scale jolted northwest China, the Royal Hong Kong observatory said on Wednesday.

The epicentre of the quake, detected at 0226 local time (1826 GMT), was initially determined to be about 80 km east of Kashi in Xinjiang Province, the royal observatory said in a statement.

Nine people were killed and 60 injured in the Xinjiang region last week after a powerful earthquake measuring 6.6. The tremor and a series of aftershocks turned the town of Jiashi into a tent city as frightened residents fled homes and offices. (Reuter)

Japan Government Lodges Criminal Complaint Against Nuclear Operator

TOKYO — A Japanese government agency lodged a criminal complaint Wednesday against executives of a state-run nuclear power company for covering up details of the country's worst nuclear accident last month.

The science and technology agency lodged the complaint with police in Ibaraki prefecture, where the Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corp. (Donen) operates the plant some 115 kilometers (70 miles) north of Tokyo.

"We accused Donen and several officials of false reporting charges," an agency official said.

If convicted of falsifying reports, fines of up to 200,000 yen ($1,590) will be imposed. The action marks the first time the agency has lodged such a complaint against a corporation under its wing.

News reports said the agency's complaint was targeted at three officials in managerial posts as well as the company itself.

Riichiro Chikaoka, the state minister in charge of the agency, told a news conference the accident and cover-up were "extremely regrettable," saying they "undermined people's confidence in nuclear power overall."

"I will take an initiative to shed light on this case, while making utmost efforts towards fundamental reforms of Donen," Chikaoka said. (AFP)

Arsonists Kill 12 in Portuguese Fire

LISBON — Hooded men burst into a northern Portuguese discotheque early Wednesday and set fire to the establishment, leaving 12 people dead, police said.

Most of the bodies of the dead, who included four men and eight women, were found close to a blocked fire exit leading to an interior courtyard, firemen said.

Fourteen people were also injured, nine of them seriously, firemen said. Hospital staff said earlier that one of those hurt suffered gunshot wounds.

The arsonists entered the "Mea Culpa" Club in Amarante, 50 kilometres (30 miles) east of Porto, at 0330 GMT and overpowered the 40 people inside, a police spokesman said. They then doused the place with fuel and set fire to it.

According to firemen, it was the second time in less than a year that a fire had broken out in the nightclub. (AFP)

Prince Ranariddh Arrives Back in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia's first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh returned to Phnom Penh Wednesday on a royal air Cambodge flight from Singapore amid tight security.

He went straight to his house, sources said.

Prince Ranariddh is president of the royalist Funcinpec Party which launched a broadside verbal offensive Wednesday after a call for the prince to be sacked.

Funcinpec Radio accused Minister of State Ung Phan of being a traitor and said his call to dump Prince Ranariddh was a plot by the "crazy Vietnamese."

About 100 heavily-armed commandos escorted the prince's motorcade, which included — apparently for the first time — two so-called "technicals," or pickups with machineguns mounted on them.

Reporters were not allowed onto the Tarmac where he was met by top Funcinpec Party and military officials. Prince Ranariddh waved and smiled as he was driven away from the airport.

It was not clear if the prince would respond personally to Ung Phan's charges of incompetence. (AFP)



NEW YORK, NY, United States (April 15): Survivors of violence and supporters wear masks at a rally of several hundred in Mid-town Manhattan New York to mark National Victims Rights Week. The masks worn at the rally, organized by the National Organization of Victim Services, symbolize the emotional wall many victims erect to hide their suffering and to shield themselves from the insensitivity of society.

(AFP PHOTO)

Separatists Appeal for Release of Western Hostages

SRINAGAR, India — A powerful Kashmiri separatist group Wednesday appealed for the release of four Western tourists abducted by fellow guerrillas nearly two years ago.

"The release can end the anxiety and woes of their (hostages') near and dear ones," a brief statement from the Harkat-ul-Ansar, said.

The hostages — American Donald Hutchings, German Dirk Hasert and Britons Keith Mangan and Paul Wells — were among six Westerners seized by gunmen in July 1995 while trekking in Pahalgam district.

An American, John Childs, managed to escape, while Norwegian Hans Christian Ostro was beheaded in August 1995 by his captors after New Delhi refused to release 15 jailed guerrillas.

The abduction was claimed by Al Faran, which Indian officials say is a front organization of Harakat.

Wednesday's announcement by Harkat came after visiting relatives of the British hostages appealed to both Harkat and Al Faran in New Delhi Monday to release the missing tourists on humanitarian grounds. (AFP)

Sri Lanka Troops Kill Five Tiger Rebels

COLOMBO — Sri Lankan security forces ambushed a group of suspected Tamil Tiger guerrillas, killing at least five of them, the Defense Ministry here said Wednesday.

Troops attacked the men believed to be from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the district of Trincomalee on Tuesday, the ministry said.

It said that the rebels attacked two army sentry points in the northern peninsula of Jaffna on Tuesday, wounding three soldiers.

The Tiger guerrillas are leading a drawn-out campaign for independence in the island's northern and eastern regions where the two million Tamil minority is concentrated.

More than 50,000 people have been killed in the drawn-out conflict since 1972. (AFP)

Booming Asian Economies to Maintain High Growth Rates

MANILA — "High growth" Asian economies such as China, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam will maintain expansion rates of between 7.0 and almost 10% from 1996 to 2000, a United Nations report said Wednesday.

The report by the UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said before the turn of the century Malaysia, which registered an estimated 8.2% increase in gross domestic product (GDP) in 1996 would average 8.3% per annum, Thailand with 6.7% growth in 1996 would average 7.3% and Vietnam with 9.4% in 1996, would average 9.9% GDP growth.

China, which grew by an estimated 9.2% in 1996 would average a GDP increase of 8.7%.

"Currently, both private and government entrepreneurship are refocusing their attention on overcoming the constraints that have been emerging as a result of the years of rapid growth," ESCAP said in its 1997 economic and social survey of Asia and the Pacific.

But, overall, it said "thrift, hardwork and entrepreneurship... government policies that provide positive support and encouragement to private enterprise within a reasonably stable macroeconomic framework have all been advanced as causes for the successful economic performance of these (high growth) economies."

It also noted these economies employed "a core development strategy" of moving away "from factor intensive industrialization towards more skilled and technology intensive growth."

The "Tiger economies" — Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan — "are expected to record more pronounced slowdown as a natural consequence of maturing economies."

Hong Kong, with estimated 5.0% GDP growth in 1996, would average 4.4% from 1996 to 2000. Singapore, with 6.7% in 1996, would average 6.0% over the five-year period to 2000. South Korea, which registered 6.6% in 1996, would maintain this growth rate until the turn of the century.

Taiwan would slow down from 6.2% in 1996 to 6.0% from 1996 to 2000.

The Philippines would grow from estimated 5.5% GDP expansion in 1996 to 7.0% in the five years to 2000.

The "slow-growing" South Asian economies would either maintain or slightly increase economic growth rates.

India, from 6.6% in 1996, would average 7.0% between 1996 and 2000, while Iran would maintain 5.1% GDP growth until 2000. Pakistan, with 6.1% in 1996, would average 6.7% growth per annum from 1996 to 2000.

The "least developed" Asian countries — Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos and Burma — would average six to seven percent GDP growth from 1996 to 2000.

Central Asian economies in transition are "expected to stabilize fully and set themselves on a path to positive growth by the turn of the century," the report said, without providing figures. (AFP)

Taiwan Amends 18 Laws to Win WTO Admission

TAIPEI — Taiwan has adapted 18 laws to internationalize the country's trade and business practices in a bid to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), economic officials said Wednesday.

The amendment bill package aimed meeting WTO requirements was approved by parliament Tuesday and would soon be referred to cabinet to put into effect, the officials said.

They added the 18 laws involved securities operations, trade, patents and trademarks, trade, taxation, accounting, publications, pharmaceuticals, banking, highway transportation, construction, and food sanitation.

The liberalization measures included allowing more foreign architects and accountants to operate here, opening local transportation business to foreign firms and offering better protection of trademarks and patents, they said.

Following the island's entry into the world trade body, foreign individuals and insititutions will be permitted to invest and manage securities exchanges here.

The Taiwan stock exchange is the island's only such organization.

Meanwhile, the Economic Ministry called on MPs to soon approve amendments to another 17 bills in line with the island's goal of being admitted into the WTO by the end of this year.

Taiwan has concluded WTO talks with 18 nations including South Africa, Malaysia, Australia, Japan and South Korea since the island applied in 1990 to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which was restructured to become the WTO in 1995. (AFP)

European Bourses Hold Breath for U.S. Prices Data

LONDON — European stock markets on Tuesday clawed back some of their losses following Wall Street's best one-day rally for three weeks overnight, although investors remained cautious ahead of U.S. economic data.

The dollar held firm a little below its 37-month high of 1.7350 marks set overnight, while bond markets ticked higher.

Wall Street's 60 point rise drove European bourses during morning trade, but investors continued to fret at the prospect that U.S. Consumer Inflation (CPI) data due at 1230 GMT could underline fears of another rise in U.S. interest rates.

Stocks on both sides of the Atlantic suffered badly after strong U.S. wholesale figures last Friday, and similarly strong retail numbers would raise the likelihood of Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan signalling another rate rise next month.

A bad CPI number will push bond yields higher and the Dow further down, another trader said.

The market reaction to Wall Street displayed by the major European bourses was reflected amongst second-tier markets too.

Amsterdam's Aex index was showing gains of just over one percent by 1115 GMT, while Milan's Mibtel was up 1.36%.

Among the majors, Frankfurt rebounded the most after being the biggest loser on Monday. The 30-share Dax Benchmark was nearly 1.5% higher at 3,328 by early afternoon.

Dealers were focusing on the U.S. price data, but some traders said the German market was still underpinned by domestic fundamentals, including the weaker mark.

Carmakers sought to maintain their early gains, particularly VW, after a report showing a three percent drop in European new car registrations during March.

London dealers rose moderately during the morning on the back of Wall Street, but traders identified a possible rise in interest rates as a continuing investor worry.

This market is just messing about. There is no real conviction to go higher, one senior London equities dealer said. Unless we see Wall Street soar over the next couple of days the risk is still on the downside.

French shares started one percent higher but later trimmed their gains to about 0.55% as caution took hold.

LVMH was 4.2% higher at 1,341 francs after it reproted a big rise in first quarter sales. Dior, up 3.32 percent at 840 francs, followed suit.

On the foreign exchange market, the prospect of higher U.S. rates was the dominating factor behind the dollar's strength and was reflected in a widening of the yield gap between U.S. and German 10-year bonds.

The dollar was quoted at 1.7337 marks and 126.20 yen after ending at 1.7228 marks and 126.45 yen in late trading in Europe on Monday. (Reuter)

On Tax Day, U.S. Lawmakers Toss Code Overboard

WASHINGTON — Conservative U.S. lawmakers vented their rage against taxes on Tuesday — the last day for filing income tax returns — with some going as far as tossing the federal tax code overboard.

Inspired by a colonial act of defiance against British taxes in 1773, several members of the House of Representatives marched onto a replica of an 18th-century schooner and flung a copy of the federal tax code into Boston harbor.

"Back when we founded this great nation, our forefathers rebelled against an unfair tax and tossed tea into Boston harbor," intoned Ron Packard, a Republican Congressman from California who participated in the made-for-television event.

"It's time to start another revolution against our current tax system," he said. "It's burdensome, flawed, outdated and unfair."

Packard and a dozen like-minded colleagues are proposing to abolish the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) — with its 136,000 employees, 480 separate tax forms and 11,000 mind-numbing pages of do's and don'ts — and replace it with a value-added tax of 15%.

Congressional Republicans, ideologically inclined to cut taxes and shrink the size of the federal government, debated a series of other tax-related proposals Tuesday as the tax deadline loomed.

The House of Representatives weighed a measure that would require any tax hike to get a two-thirds majority vote in each chamber. This makes it considerably harder to pass.

Republican leaders, meanwhile, promised to undertake a comprehensive reform of the tax system as part of their effort to balance the federal budget. They also repeated their call for cuts in taxes on capital gains. (AFP)

Zimbabwean Flowers Blossom on European Markets

HARARE — When a few Zimbabweans took up rose growing in their spare time a few years ago, little did they foresee that their hobby would turn into one of the country's largest export spinning businesses.

The flower industry in Zimbabwe has blossomed into one of the most bouyant and fastest growing industries in recent years, placing the country among the world's major suppliers of horticultural produce on the tight international market.

On the domestic front, the horticultural industry is now tailing the tobacco industry in terms of foreign currency earnings.

Earnings in recent years rose from about $30,000 to more than a $100 million last year.

"This places horticulture second to tobacco in terms of foreign currency earnings," President Robert Mugabe said recently.

Zimbabwe is one of the world's top three producers of flue-cured tobacco, and the leaf is the country's top export earner.

Stanley Heri, head of the Horticultural Promotions Council (HPC) said that last year the horticultural industry grew by 35% from the previous year.

Zimbabwe is now ranked among the biggest suppliers of fresh cut flowers to Europe after Colombia, Israel and Kenya.

Zimbabwe and Kenya are Africa's largest rose exporting countries followed by others like ivory coast, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia and Swaziland, according to recent statistics available from an local association of export flower growers.





Located in the southern part of the African continent - with a favorable climate, low labor costs and modern air transport - Zimbabwe was spurred into expanding the industry by the rising energy and labor costs in the northern hemisphere.

A high tropical plateau and a climate that provides long days of light and ample water supplies and good daily air connections to Europe, makes it an ideal country for horticultural production.

Although not a traditional producer of flowers, many of the first renonwed producers in Zimbabwe started off as a hobby and because of the delicacy needed in floriculture some of the industry's large-scale growers have a background of tobacco growing.

The leading export produce are roses, lilies and carnations which with fresh fruit and vegetables are supplied not only to Europe but to regional markets as well.

However, in spite of Zimbabwe's primary advantages for horticulture, it still spends a lot on freight charges due to its distance from western Europe where its main markets lie.

Labor costs are relatively low in Zimbabwe due to very high unemployment levels of over 35% and the fact that most workers live near the farms and walk to work rather than commute.

New markets are now being developed in Japan, the Middle East and eastern Europe.

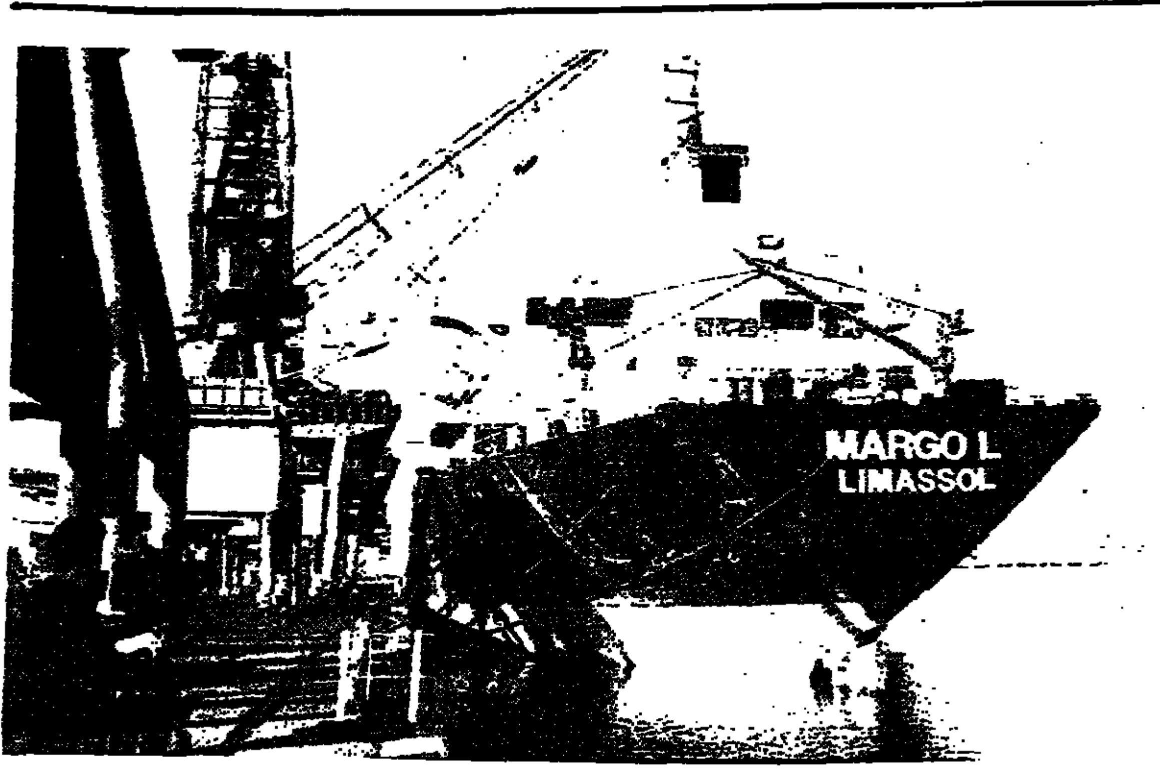
The export season runs from September to May targetting the peak demand season in the northern hemisphere.

Production locations are mainly concentrated within a few hundred kilometers (miles) from the capital for easy access to the international airport.

Flowers are pre-cooled at farms and ferried in refrigerated trucks to Harare airport where the main carriers are the national airfretair, South African ones as well as the French and Dutch carriers for the nine-hour direct flights to European destinations.

Large-scale producers are still mainly white with a handful of emerging small black owners.

Despite world production rising, the industry is blooming and is well positioned for continued expansion, according to the horticultural promotions council. (AFP)



AVONMOUTH, United Kingdom (April 14): "Margo L" a cargo coming from Columbia docks in Avonmouth after 200 kg of cocaine worth 3 million U.S.$ was seized from it. The cocaine was discovered in the hold below the waterline during a routine search by the British customs.

(AFP PHOTO)

Wacky Inventors Show Off at Geneva Exhibition

GENEVA — Cigarettes that don't produce smoke, solar cookers for refugees and buttons that need no sewing were among a thousand new devices that went on display this week at Geneva's inventions exhibition, the inventors' equivalent of the olympics.

Among the most catchy ones were, from Russia, spectacles with acoustic sensors for people with sight deficiency, from Switzerland a skateboard with a shopping bag and brakes for housewives.

The highlight of this year's exhibition was the stand of a team of Russian rocket scientists, engineers and retired army officers from Moscow's crumbling defense industry, now hoping to join in the post-Soviet money-making frenzy.

A new night-vision device, an open helicopter designed for invalids, a hydrobike with sails, a stain-removing dry cleaning stick made with rocket fuel technology and a new aircraft that could help Russia's chaotic Aeroflot Airline to overload even more — they could have only come from Russia.

"It was better in the old days," lamented Russian ex-army officer and military engineer Valery Solovyov, inventor of the aircraft which has increased cargo capacity thanks to larger wings.

"We had more inventors before. Now everything costs money — patents, registration. Too much for a pensioner like me."

He added: "I tried to sell my idea to our Tupolov aircraft manufacturers. They said they have no money. I wrote to Washington, I wrote to Boeing. They didn't even reply."

Nearby, Russian engineer Grigory Bushmarinov was busy taking questions from an elderly Swiss lady interested in a necklace with a crystal pendant that changes color when the sun's ultraviolet rays are dangerous — made by a factory producing rocket parts for the Russian military industrial complex.

"We came here to talk business. But all these people are like tourists. This type of exhibition should be more specialized and technical," he later complained to Reuters.

Across his stand, the All-Russia Research Institute for Medical Technologies was offering a biocorrector with a scanner promising to restore health with resonating sound frequencies.

Mikhail Tatischev, deputy chairman of the Commercial Company Binar which is marketing the device, said: This technology was top secret in Soviet times. Now it's good business.

In the crowd of more than 600 scientists, boffins, engineers and wacky inventors from 44 countries, one of the most scary ideas was from a German who invented a metal device to insert into a pregnant woman's body to help deliver her baby more easily.

With a rubber tube and a jumble of bolts and safety valves, the happy birthday instrument for obstetricians looked straight out of an antiquated science-fiction movie.

Its creator, Michael Belinek from Bayern, said the device had not been tested on humans yet but offered the assurance: it's not dangerous. The tube moves inside a woman's body, right into the channel of birth, and contacts the baby and delivers it quickly. It is not exactly a vacuum method.

He said the idea came to him in a dream: "I dreamt about it, then I constructed it. It took me 10 years."

Other inventions at the exhibition, which organizers hope will generate new business worth 40 million Swiss francs, were more user-friendly.

French ideas included an anti-snoring device and a button which is stuck, not sewed, to garments and could revolutionize the textile industry, while the Swiss had new designs for skiers and skaters and hygiene products such as an automatic toilet seat protector.

A huge crowd of smokers gathered around Gabriel Van der Elst from Belgium to test his new smokeless cigarette — a filterlike device attached to the cigarette which makes it last twice as long and stops the smoke from coming out.

"My mother always made me smoke outside the house and drove me mad," he said. "With this, I can smoke my one and a half packs a day without disturbing anyone."

(Reuter)

Soldier Court Martialled for Shooting Rat

PORTSMOUTH, England — A Royal Marine corporal faced a court martial here Tuesday for shooting at a rat while hiding in dense undergrowth on an undercover mission to smash a car-smuggling ring in Hong Kong.

Corporal Steven Leech, 27, is alleged to have put the covert operation in danger by taking a shot at the rodent.

The marine turned to a radio operator on the mission and said "I'm fed up with the rat and I'm going to take it out," the court in this southern English city heard.

He then fired his 9-MM browning pistol in an attempt to kill the rat as it emerged from undergrowth.

Leech was on deployment with 45 commando unit to HMS Tamar, the Royal Navy base in Hong Kong, to help break a luxury-car smuggling ring organized by Triads who were shipping stolen vehicles to China.

The unit, consisting of Leech, radio operator Marine Philip Harris and two Gurkhas, was working alongside the Hong Kong police and customs officials on the special operation.

"Leech deliberately and without regard to the safety of his team discharged a round of ammunition and as such neglected his duties as an operation commander," the prosecutor told the court.

He added that under regulations, animals were not to be killed unless they were life-threatening and any firing of a weapon must be reported to superiors.

Leech denies neglecting to perform his duties and failing to report firing his gun.

The case continues. (AFP)

"ASEANarean" to Rival Caribbean, Mediterranean as Leisure Hub

"It rhymes with and will rival the Mediterranean and the Caribbean as the most successful, exotic and exciting region of the world."

SINGAPORE — Southeast Asia, known for its crystal clear seas and white beaches, is setting its sights on to becoming a world-class marine leisure playground to rival the Caribbean and the Mediterranean.

As seaside holiday spots in the region multiply, the tourism industry has even come up with a name for the would-be idyll — ASEANarean — derived from the acronym for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

"It rhymes with and will rival the Mediterranean and the Caribbean as the most successful, exotic and exciting region of the world," said Franscis Lee, president of Singapore's Raffles Marina Ltd., which runs the region's top marina here.

The name was floated at boat Asia '97, the region's largest boat show held here last week which attracted more than 450 companies in the pleasure boat, Marina, commercial craft, water sports and tackle industries.

"The name aims to give a new complexion and impetus to this region..." Lee told AFP, saying it would lend a collective identity to Southeast Asia as a tourist destination.

"By giving it a name, it is like giving the region a corporate identity — it is something that everybody can identify with and use to give greater efforts and enthusiasm to the promotion of this region," Lee said.

The industry has the support of policymakers in tourism-conscious ASEAN, which groups Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

"This vision is commendable and deserves our strongest support," Singapore Communications Minister Mah Bow Tan said, citing Southeast Asia's "ideal weather and bountiful seas" for marine leisure tourism.

Government authorities in the region are also working together to promote the marine leisure industry, Mah said, adding that the idea had been discussed at a recent meeting of tourism officials from Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

Southeast Asia is the fastest growing and most lucrative market in the world for the marine leisure industry, according to experts attending Boat Asia.

An array of marinas are coming up across the region to capitalize on the growing affluence of their populations as well as on their increasing leisure time, tourism industry officials said.

"You are paying for the car, the clothes, the food... what's left? The leisure dollar," said Robert Hall, director of the British Marine Industries Federation.

"If people have more leisure time, they will want to have something to do," Hall said.

Malaysia intends to build one major marina in each of its 13 states, while 20 "pocket marinas" are taking shape in the Philippines offering facilities for pleasure boating, sailing, wind surfing, snorkeling, jet skiing and fishing.

"Economic growth and higher disposable incomes have led to the pursuit of upmarket leisure activities such as boating," said Malaysian marine industry official Oh Kean Shen.

Eight new marinas and yacht clubs are coming up in Singapore, where berthing capacity for pleasure boats will almost double in the near future, officials said.

The growing infrastructure adds to the natural allure of the region which boasts thousands of islands — 17,000 in Indonesia alone — and the world's highest marine biodiversity, officials said.

"ASEANarean" seas are home to 2,500 species of marine fish and 400 species of hard corals. The Caribbean has 600 species of marine fish and 100 species of hard corals and the Mediterranean even fewer.

"The area has a lot to commend it. Whether in fact it (ASEANarean) will ever become more than just a name I don't know. The Caribbean is pretty well known, the Med has been there for a thousand years."

The region accounts for two percent of the earth's water surface, twice that of the rivals it wants to best, and an array of exotic resorts, rustic fishing villages and waterways in the confluence of warm equatorial waters.

"The area has a lot to commend it," Hall said. "Whether in fact it (ASEANarean) will ever become more than just a name I don't know. The Caribbean is pretty well known, the Med has been there for a thousand years." (AFP)

Official Photo of Camilla Sets Tongues Wagging

LONDON — An official photo of Camilla Parker-Bowles, Prince Charles' 49-year-old divorced girlfriend, marking her new charity role, has set tongues wagging over her future role in his life.

The portrait, taken by quasi-official royal photographer Sir Geoffrey Shakerley, married to Queen Elizabeth's cousin, was selected by Parker-Bowles to mark her association with the National Osteoporosis Society.

It was being seen by the British press as her first deliberate step into the public arena, although Buckingham Palace and the royal family have always been tight-lipped about any possibility of a marriage between the two.

The Prince of Wales and Parker-Bowles were close before either of them married, and his continuing relationship with her, which he acknowledged in a television interview, was widely viewed as one of the reasons behind his divorce from Princess Diana last summer.

Parker-Bowles was also divorced last year.

The photo of Parker-Bowles is unremarkable, showing her wearing a sober dark jacket over a beige ribbed top with a simple gold necklace. Her smile is described by the press as "enigmatic."

Parker-Bowles, who has never spoken publicly about her relationship with Charles, was "not making any comment" on Tuesday, a spokeswoman for the charity said.

The development was being seen however, as the first stage in an effort to raise Parker-Bowles' profile as the woman in the life of the future king of England. (AFP)

Japanese Sect Member Detained in Moscow

MOSCOW — A member of the Japanese sect Aum Supreme Truth has been arrested and put under detention in Moscow, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported Tuesday.

Quoting the Russian prosecutor general's office, it said Keiji Tanimura had been accused of "illegal distribution of pornographic magazines and violating the rights of citizens."

A member of the Russian branch of the Japanese sect — linked to a sensational 1995 toxic gas attack on Tokyo's public transit system that killed 12 people — was arrested in February on the Russo-Finnish border.

In July 1995 another member of the Russian branch was taken into custody, but later released. (AFP)

Swiss Pitbull Abandons Sausage-Hanging Record

BELLINZONE, Switzerland — The Swiss owner of a pitbull terrier abandoned his dog's bid for the record of hanging from a synthetic sausage, which currently stands at more than an hour.

Owner Michele Pesce of Moleno, southeastern Switzerland, gave into pressure from animal rights groups who said such stunts involved cruel training techniques.

"Kid", 19 months old, was to try to beat the record set by a Spanish dog whose fearsome jaws recently held him salivating off the ground for 70 minutes.

But the Society for the Protection of Animals here threatened to bring legal action if pesce went ahead with the attempt on the bizarre record. (AFP)

Breast Cancer Genes





THOUGHT

I ADVISE you to be afraid of God, I advise you to adopt piety, because piety is the safest way to Salvation and the best support for religion.

Imam Ali (AS)

PRAYER

Noon	13:04
Evening	19:59
Dawn (tomorrow)	04:50
Sunrise (tomorrow)	06:28

Breast Cancer Genes Cause Buildup of Other Genetic Mutations

SAN DIEGO — Bad genes that are often to blame when breast cancer runs in families may do their damage by riddling the genetic code with errors.

Women who are born with mutated forms of genes called brca1 and brca2 are almost certain to get breast cancer. Exactly why these mutations lead to breast cancer has been unclear.

But Dr. Mika Tirkkonen of the University of Tampere in Finland presented research that suggests the genes promote the accumulation of a series of genetic errors that eventually trigger breast cells to grow out of control.

He found that when women with brca1 or brca2 get breast cancer, their cells carry twice as many genetic mutations as do those of women with noninherited forms of breast cancer.

Researchers suspect that the genes, in their normal form, play a role in making sure genetic material is copied accurately when cells divide. So when the genes go bad, the body loses its ability to correct its genetic errors.

Tirkkonen presented his research, conducted with scientists from the United States, Sweden and Iceland, at a meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Mutant forms of brca1 and brca2 together cause about 5 percent to 10 percent of all breast cancer and 5 percent of all ovarian cancer. They are often to blame when these forms of cancer strike many women in the same family.

A woman born with either brca1 or brca2 has about an 85 percent lifetime risk of breast cancer. Brca1 also gives her a 40 percent to 60 percent risk of ovarian cancer, while brca2 causes a 10 percent to 20 percent risk of ovarian cancer.

Tirkkonen studied breast tumor samples taken from 21 women with brca1 mutations, 15 with brca2 mutations and 55 from women with no genetic predisposition to cancer. He analyzed all the genes in the tumors and found large differences in the degree and types of genetic changes.

He said the findings support the theory that the breast cancer genes cause cells to become genetically unstable. These cells "rapidly accumulate a large number of gene mutations, which may lead to cancer development at an unusually early age." Furthermore, tumor cells from women with bad brca1 and brca2 often showed certain clusters of genetic defects that are rare in women with noninherited breast cancer.

"The pattern of genetic changes suggests that the biological properties of these cancers may be different," Tirkkonen said.

Dr. Henry T. Lynch of Creighton University said the findings fit with what researchers see under the microscope. Malignant cells from women with inherited tumors often look more aggressive than do those from ordinary cancers.

He said this raises the possibility that women with cancer triggered by brca1 and brca2 may respond to treatments differently than do other breast cancer patients.

"Maybe we should begin thinking about therapy that is matched to molecular genetics," Lynch said. (AP)

Course on Genetic Cloning to Open Soon

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Public Relations of the National Center for Genetic Engineering Research and Biological Training, in a message faxed yesterday, announced the holding of a one-week practical and theoretical course on gene cloning and the role genes play in the development of prokaryote cells.

The aim of the seminar, due to start on Sunday, April 19, 1997, is to study ways of applying the most up-to-date methods and techniques of providing and producing protein drugs through genetic engineering, to examine some diseases by viewing their molecular genetic composition, to enhance research support in certain practical studies and to offer special strategies to help laboratories of health centers meet some of their specialized needs.

Participants are to be familiarized with some basic and modern techniques of genetic engineering and biotechnology, their practical function in researches, as well as the basics of how to separate a gene from a mass of genes and to transfer it to bacterial cells in order to produce a gene that will produce a desired protein.

Techniques in genetic engineering that are to be presented at the seminar are expected to contribute to the discovery of new vaccines, enzymes, medicinal proteins, improvement of plants, ways of fighting pests and producing microorganisms effective in fighting waste and other environmental contaminators, as well as provide insights into possible cures for some gene-related diseases, especially cancers, the message read.

Fresh-Brewed Coffee May Fight Cancer

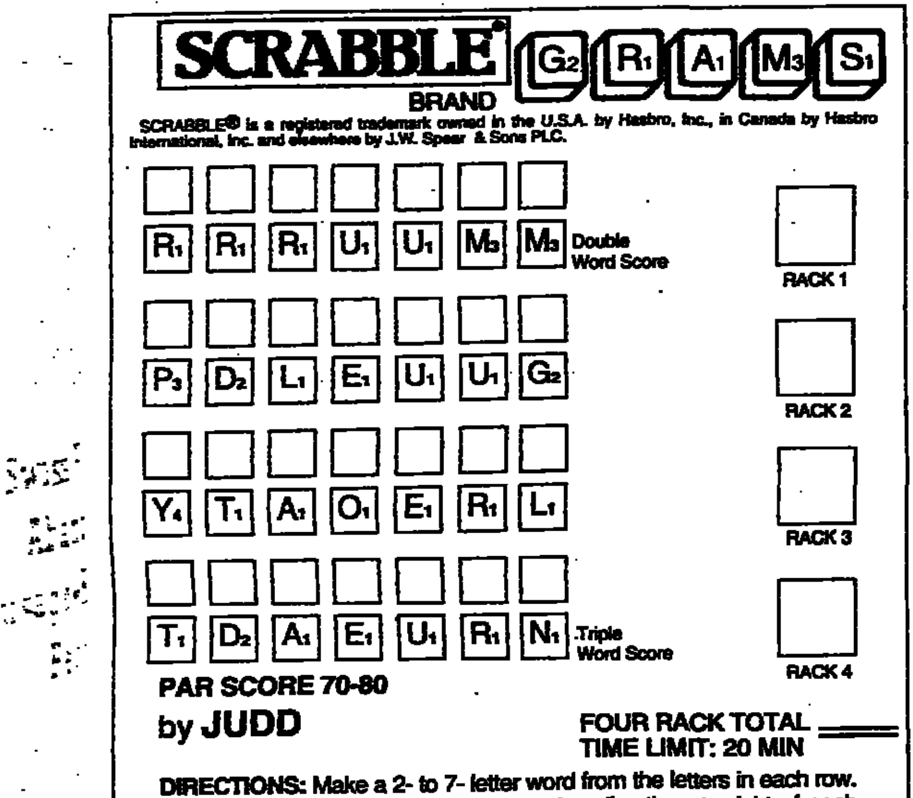
SAN FRANCISCO — A freshly-brewed cup of coffee may do more than just wake you up in the morning — its smell might be helping your body fight cancer and heart disease, a California researcher said this week.

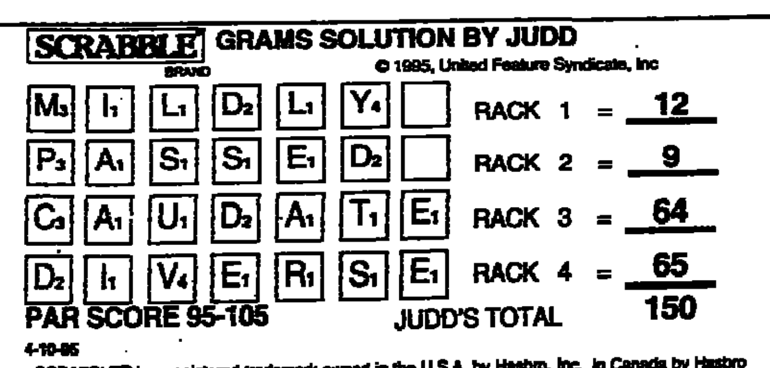
High-temperature coffee brewing produces protective chemicals called antioxidants that can be beneficial to health, according to Takayuki Shibamoto, a professor of environmental toxicology at the University of California at Davis, near Sacramento.

It's comparable to a potent antioxidant like vitamin e or vitamin c, and down the line, we may find that the flavor or aroma of coffee may have some beneficial health effects, Shibamoto said.

Oxidants are oxygen-containing molecules called free radicals. Many scientists believe they can damage DNA and the membrane of cells in ways that lead to cancer.

Antioxidants can reduce free-radical levels, and have been shown in recent studies to have cancer and age-fighting effects as (Contd on Pg.14)

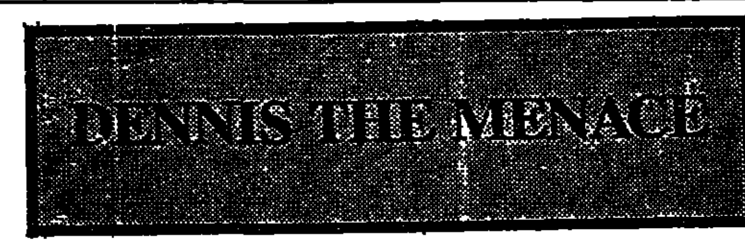




HEALTH CAPSULES®
by Michael A. Petti, M.D.



Health Capsules is not intended to be of a diagnostic nature.





"SEE HOW LOOSE IT IS? SOON AS IT COMES OUT, THE TOOTH FAIRY WILL GIVE ME THE MONEY TO PAY YOU!"














In the Name of God
I. R. of Iran
Ministry of Commerce
Deputy for Exports





Tehran International Trade Fair **Export Promotion Center of Iran**

23rd Tehran International Trade Fair

October 2-9, 1997

In line with the economic goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Export Promotion Center of Iran (EPCI) is planning to stage the 23rd Tehran International Trade Fair in an attempt to boost non-oil exports, stimulate greater export competition among domestic manufacturers, facilitate the transfer of technology and ultimately to put on view the economic, technical and commercial potentials of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As growing demand for participation in the 23rd Tehran International Trade Fair may result in a shortage of exhibition space, all interested firms and companies are requested to send their application to the EPCI latest by May 12, 1997. After site allocation and other preparations, applicants will be invited to sign fair participation contract. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. For further information you may contact the organizer on telephone number 2191564 and 2191568, Fax: 2042858

Please complete and send the following application form to P.O.Box 1148, Tajrish.

Name of company:

Address:

Telephone No.: Fax No.:

Space needed (in square meters)

Field of activity:

Country:





هكذا من الأصل



ISTANBUL, Turkey (April 11): Pro-Islamic demonstrators gather on the Beyazit Square in front of the former gate to the ancient city of Istanbul (background), during a protest rally of several thousand to denounce what they called the Israel's violent policies towards Palestinians. The crowd, most of them students, gathered here after Friday prayers in a nearby mosque and shouted anti-Israeli slogans before burning an Israeli flag. Police detained two demonstrators, the private television channel NTV reported.
(AFP PHOTO)

UK Conservatives Face Struggle in Cornwall

PENZANCE, England — The spring sun is shining brightly on Britain's picturesque Cornish Riviera but the political outlook for the ruling Conservatives is gloomy.

'It is probable their uninterrupted 46 years hold on the St Ives Constituency, on the distant southwestern tip of England, will be broken at the general election on May 1.

In many ways, St Ives is a microcosm of the country.

People in the constituency's sleepy port of Penzance, 320 miles (500 km) from London, are deeply disillusioned by politicians whom locals say have consistently ignored Cornwall's serious problems.

Voters have turned away from the Conservatives because of their perceived incompetence. They are lukewarm about the Labour Party and look upon May 1 as an opportunity to lodge a protest against the London-centric political establishment.

We're fed up with politics. No *one has the edge. I don't believe* the public care at all. They've bored us all to tears, said local baker Ian Trelawney.

Tourism apart, western Cornwall relies heavily on the fishing and farming industries, two powerful lobbies which the Conservatives and the European Union have managed to alienate in recent years.

Liberal Democrats Confident in the Southwest

What promises to be a bitter pre-election battle is made more intriguing by the intervention of *anti-European entrepreneur* Sir James Goldsmith, whose referendum party is threatening to siphon away votes from the Conservatives.

The minority liberal democrats are confident they can take the seat as part of a clean sweep of southwestern England, where their influence has traditionally been strong.

Local candidate Adrian George, who lost the 1992 election to the Conservatives by just 1,645 votes, is proposing a contract with Cornwall to address the crisis in the region.

Although Cornwall is famed for its unspoiled beaches, cosy summer cottages and spectacular scenery, the *postcard images* conceal one of the poorest areas in the country.

Local unemployment is as high as 22 percent, almost four times the national average, and many of the jobs which do exist are low-paid and seasonal. Young people in search of decent work tend to move away and often fail to return.

Poor infrastructure means prices are high while what little industry there was in the region has moved away.

The Conservatives are facing major trouble here. They've forced the issue of Europe onto the agenda but the real issues are health, education and the economy of Cornwall, said George.

He wants a local university to stem the exodus of young people and is pressing for a Cornish development agency to funnel funds into the impoverished region and attract more grants from the European Union.

Conservatives Field Untried Candidate

To make matters worse for the Conservatives, their popular legislator David Harris is stepping down after 14 years to make way for untried insurance broker William Rogers.

No one's perfect, we all make mistakes, and the government is no different, Rogers told a meeting of local activists.

The Conservative Party is no different. But on all the crucial decisions the Conservative Party has been right.

But an unofficial Reuter poll failed to find a single local person

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Kenyan Opposition MPs Protest Police Brutality

NAIROBI — Forty Kenyan opposition lawmakers have strongly condemned "primitive police brutality" meted out against opposition MPs and their supporters throughout Kenya.

In a signed statement issued in Parliament here Tuesday the MPs said police and the provincial administration, acting on government orders, "have *assaulted, injured and even* maimed several MPs and their supporters. "

The opposition MPs said they had no doubt that the authorities were directly involved in the "primitive scheme to silence the opposition by use of force. "

And they linked the attacks to general elections later this year, noting that the *Kenya African National Union of President* Daniel Arap Moi had already started campaining for the polls, expected by the end of the year.

The statement charged that the government had already starting moves to rig the vote, "using intimidation and force, and other illegal ways and means to win the elections.

"We wish to inform President Daniel Arap Moi and the government that if they believe that intimidation, violence and use of force must be used everytime we go to an election, like what happened in 1992, then they are grossly mistaken.

"Kenyans will not take that prescription any longer," the MPs warned.

"We are demanding that the government stops police brutality forthwith and let the opposition carry out its campaign *peacefully," the MPs said, adding* that they would not be responsible for the consequences if the authorities failed to act.

On Saturday, opposition MPs Raila and Oburu Odinga, sons of the late opposition leader Oginga Odinga, were assaulted by police who were trying to stop them addressing supporters at the rift valley town of Eldoret. *Oburu Odinga's arm was reportedly* broken in the altercations.

The town is said to be stronghold of Moi supporters.

On Monday, riot police shot and seriously wounded a bodyguard of the official opposition leader, Michael Kijana Wamalwa, in the western Kenyan town of Kakamega.

In a separate incident Monday, riot police stormed the home of presidential hopeful charity Ngilu, in the Kitui constituency in Kenya's eastern province, but the opposition MP locked herself in the house for hours to avoid arrest, press reports said.

Earlier the local police chief ordered some 200 supporters who had called at the MPs home to disperse, saying the MP had no authority to hold meetings whether inside or outside her homestead.

The flurry of incidents came *just two months after opposition* MP and human rights lawyer Paul Muite and several members of the unregistered opposition Safina Party were assaulted by police in Kenya's central Nyeri district.

Muite protested on Sunday that one of the officers involved had been promoted to be deputy head of a police station in his Kikuyu constituency, in Nairobi's western suburbs.

Police spokesman Peter Kimanthi, meanwhile, denied that police had beaten up the odingas, but confirmed that the security forces had broken up the meeting and fired teargas to prevent an unauthorized meeting.

Kanu Secretary-General and Education Minister Joseph Kamotho warned, however, that the government would not allow the opposition to orchestrate civil disobedience. *(AFP)*

How Safe Is the Air We Breathe?

Tehran Times Service

A recent article published in the Farsi daily Kayhan blamed Tehran residents, particularly drivers, for the problem of air pollution in Tehran.

The problem is that some writers attribute the problem on what they say is apathy on the part of government authorities who consider car owners as being mainly responsible for the deteriorating situation.

One may be able to survive for several days without food or water but one cannot survive more than five minutes without air.

It is consoling to note that the problem is not new and not peculiar to Tehran. The big difference is that governments put the blame on different groups of people. Is it correct to blame only the drivers and car owners? Government authorities, who themselves are car owners (if not drivers), have only to remember that they have been selected by the same people whom they blame for the problem to tackle these kind of problems as policy-makers, and now they point their fingers on the people. The cycle is therefore a cause of concern.

We will never be full talking about this topic. The media, as everybody knows, plays a vital role too and must keep reminding the authorities to do something. On the other hand, we can say that merely talking is better than not talking as it is proof that we realize the seriousness of the situation.

Why do some people put the blame only on car owners? Should people be discouraged from buying cars?

As everybody knows, cars are not a luxury anymore. They are necessities in life. The solution, therefore, would not be had by simply discouraging people from owning cars. There are certain measures that may be taken by the authorities.

First of all, it is necessary to pinpoint the air pollutants. It may be well to remind that pollution does not only occur in the streets but even inside our homes as well. The air fumigants that we use, gas heaters, and even insect killers are air pollutants.

To make the air that we breathe really clean, the government must take the initiative in launching a strict campaign against air pollutants in general. It should spend more money and time on educating the public as to the hazards of air pollution similar to what other governments are now doing in the case of cigarette smoking.

One of the main causes why people are so interested in or forced to drive a car is the ample leisure time, lack of appropriate public transportation and cheap gasoline.

It might seem that the public is just as guilty as the government authorities when it comes to understanding the potential risks of air pollution and what can be done about it. If they approach the problem in a rational way they themselves will reap the fruits of their labor.

For some countries, particularly the developed ones, it is a blessing to have ample leisure time. But here in Iran it is a symptom of many problems. For one thing, statistics reveal that Iran has one of the youngest populations. On the other hand, it has also quite a large number of unemployed. These two segments of the population seemingly play a minor — if not a major — role in creation of traffic congestions. The young go on driving sprees while the unemployed take on jobs as drivers. Thus if there were other means by which these two segments of the population could put to better use their free time the problem of air pollution in the long run would be less.

There will be a rude awakening if we do not soon get a handle on air pollution

One suggestion would be to open vocational training centers where young people may be made to undergo compulsory training and then be employed with adequate wages in production centers. In this way they will not only have less time to wander around or drive aimlessly on the roads but also will help solve the inflation problem by raising production.

Imagine a situation where people, instead of wandering around the town in cars, buses, taxis or on foot are either working in factories, going to schools (vocational or ordinary ones) or are engaged in any other productive job. There would be less people in the streets and more people in working places.

Consider the following added suggestions:

1. Launch a project for building a new modern city in compliance with urban development plans. The city, which must observe strict zoning areas, should have residential areas far from areas susceptible to pollution. An ideal city would obviously attract a part of the capital city's population.

Another alternative would be to transfer the capital city to other cities such as Isfahan.

2. Give the private sector opportunities to invest in public transport such as in companies that operate electric buses, subways, cable-cars etc..

3. Designate busy roads as being "off-limits" to private vehicles one day in the week, preferably Saturday. Only public buses and taxicabs should be allowed. Motorcycles or scooters and mini-buses should also be banned.

4. Pass strict anti-pollution regulations to be enforced by police officers trained in curbing pollution.

5. Form an inspection committee to determine automobiles that should be banned from the city's streets. Each vehicle should pass inspection by the committee and receive an approval sticker. Those in charge of issuing the stickers must be employed and singled out meticulously through thorough screening and must be absolutely reliable. Any vehicle not having this sticker must be banned from use.

Experts believe that the quickest way to embark on a program to eradicate junk cars and pollutants is to start a step-by-step campaign. For example the mayor of one of the small towns adjacent to the capital city (say Karaj or Chalus) can be the pioneer in the campaign and announce that starting, say June 1, 1997, any car entering or running in that city must meet particular requirements. Next comes Tehran-Karaj free-way followed by Tehran-Qom express-way which should be closed to pollutant vehicles. Parking lots of all the supermarkets, chain department stores, fruit/vegetable markets (Tarehbar), entertainment centers and the like should become off limit to light vehicles lacking catalizors or passenger-cars which do not comply with international guidelines. In other words the new strict law can be enforced gradually in different parts. One by one streets or zones become off-limit to certain motor-vehicles. The new regulations are not something that can be introduced over-night. New traffic regulations if imposed step-by-step will be easier to accept.

The municipality and other relevant organizations have come under fire for failing to tackle the problem

6. No new license plate should be issued for obsolete cars.

7. All trucks and buses must be made to turn off their engine while parking or stopping longer than five minutes.

8. Private vehicles should not be allowed to operate as taxicabs. All taxicabs should operate on a "hire as you call" basis. This way they will not be running on the roads looking for passengers or customers. If anybody needs a taxi he can always telephone the agency. Aside from drastically reducing pollution, lots of time and gasoline will be saved.

9. Electric cars should be put on the streets. Imported cars should not be discouraged from entering the country and prices should as much as possible be competitive. Instead of selling foreign cars at exorbitant prices people should be given the opportunity to buy them in installments. The reason why there are still a lot of junk cars in this country is that foreign cars are exorbitant in price.

Analysts suggest that the car importer as well as Iran Khodro and SAIPA companies must purchase obsolete and old cars from the owners and offer the customers a trade-in deal for pollution free cars. A loan should also be offered so that the customers can use the loan to pay the balance.

If we seriously look at the traffic problem in this country it is not as serious as in other countries, say Japan or Thailand. However, it is unfortunate that Tehran is considered the second most polluted city in the world. This only proves the seriousness of the pollution problem in this metropolis which is not getting any better in spite of the attention being focused on it by the mass media.

Therefore, we may draw the conclusion that the plausible solution is to encourage cars that are virtually exhaust free. If terms and prices are encouraging, car users will be willing and cooperative to substitute their old cars.

Research projects should be launched to solve the problem of air-pollution. The diversified aspects of the problem must be tackled.

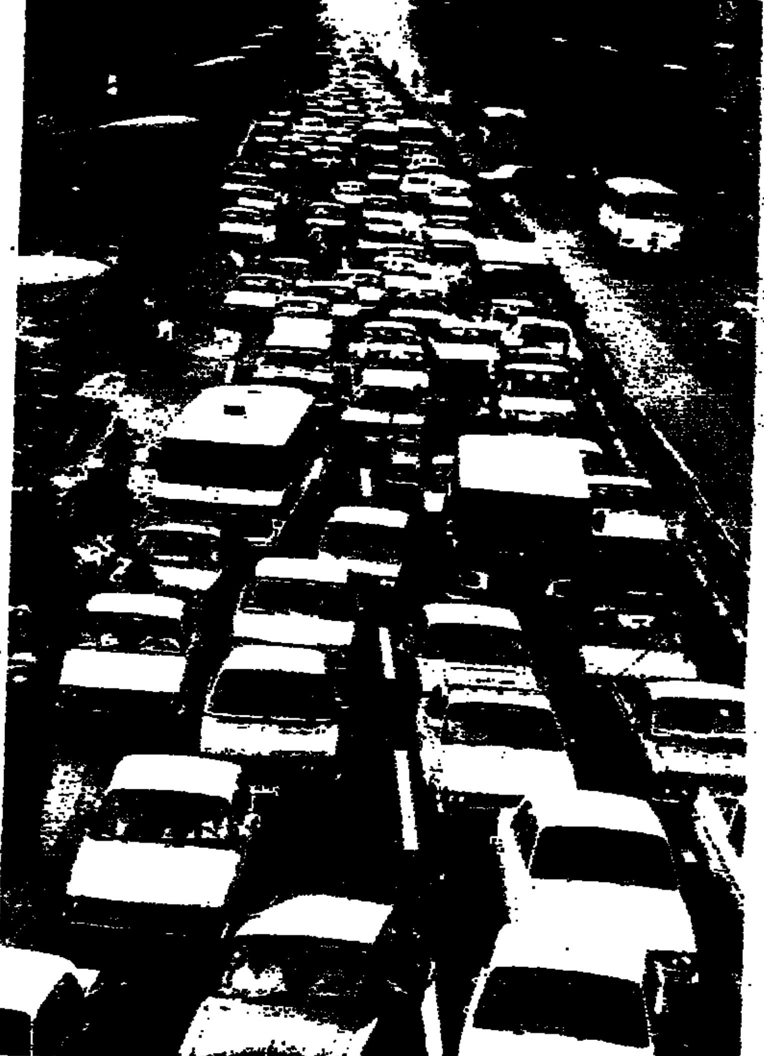
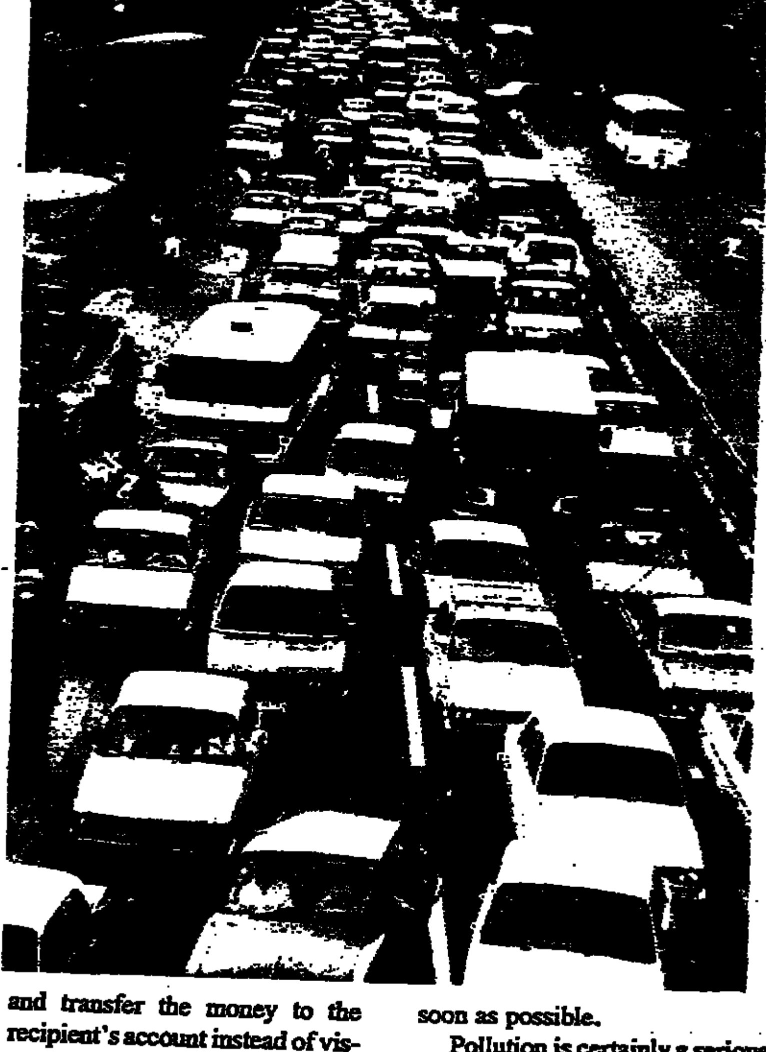
The authorities should focus on eradicating air-pollution rather than on mottoes and mere propaganda

Experts suggest that one of the measures to be taken in this regard is to interview people to seek their opinion on how to cope with traffic jams, pollution and population growth in big cities. New policies should be formulated in compliance with the research results.

During interviews with city bus and taxi passengers they can be asked questions like where they are going, how often and why they take such and such bus or route and wouldn't they prefer to use telephone or other communication means instead.

In other words people must be helped to understand and learn to refrain from making useless trips and commuting when there are alternatives.

For example, suppose you wish to pay your bills or debts you can go to the nearest bank and transfer the money to the recipient's account instead of visiting him/her. You can also benefit from ATM (automated teller machine) to pay your bills. There are diversified means which can be used as substitutes for visiting in person. The traditional way of visiting a place without telephoning was good in small villages where no cars or telephones were used.

10. The price of goods must be the same everywhere in the city to prevent trips by consumers who are after the bargains or best deals. Unfortunately the price of goods varies in different parts of Tehran. This leads to unnecessary trips by customers. A man residing in north of Tehran sometimes makes a trip to south of the city because he knows he can save at least 500 rials on one item.

11. The Tehran Metro Project once accomplished will certainly play a pivotal role in reducing the pollution. There is no doubt that it would also lead to mounting a desire among citizens to reside in Karaj rather than in Tehran. Karaj, 35 km west of Tehran used to be one of the suburbs of Tehran. But now it is expanding rapidly and is expected to grow into one of large cities in near future. Metro is to link Karaj to Tehran.

Beyond doubt a deadline must be set for the people in charge of metro project to make it operational. People cannot wait for ever. Metro management should be called to a live TV debate and interrogated on the reasons of the delay and answer the questions raised on rumors surrounding this problem. This will urge them to decide to finish the project as soon as possible.

Pollution is certainly a serious problem endangering the lives of children, elderly and the young alike.

Presently it seems impossible to solve this problem overnight. It would be like trying to learn to speak a foreign language overnight. But let us suppose that we were forced to learn the language or solve such a problem as the pollution. Suppose we realized that the pollution poses a real danger. Suppose you were told you have to either solve a particular given problem within a month (or before a certain deadline) or you would lose your job. Then what would you do?

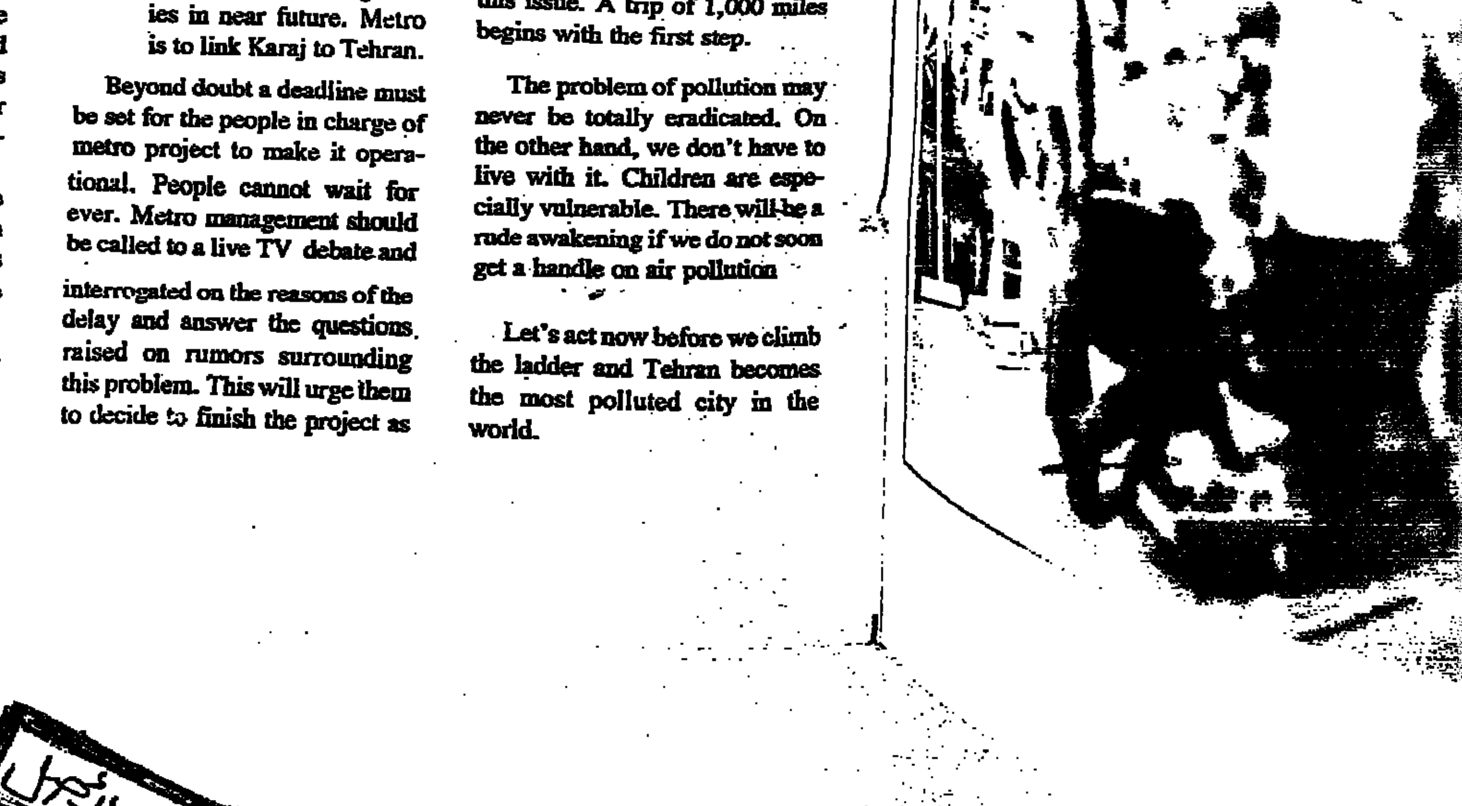
12. Another good suggestion would be to plant more trees. More trees mean more oxygen and cleaner air.

13. The last suggestion would be to encourage decentralization. The Tehran Metro project, once operational, will be a great boost in easing decentralization. For example, a likely result would be to encourage Tehran residents to move to Karaj. Karaj, 35 km west of Tehran, is a fast-growing suburb and its development will be expedited once the metro becomes operational. Many offices, private and governmental, can be relocated there.

It is also suggested that as the first measure to be taken is inviting the relevant authorities to a live weekly television debate on this issue. A trip of 1,000 miles begins with the first step.

The problem of pollution may never be totally eradicated. On the other hand, we don't have to live with it. Children are especially vulnerable. There will be a rude awakening if we do not soon get a handle on air pollution.

Let's act now before we climb the ladder and Tehran becomes the most polluted city in the world.



PAGE 11 Cultura Effe... Characteri...

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Cultural Effects of Toys on Characteristics of Children

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — On account of the vital role toys play in influencing the development of character traits in children and determining even their physical development, choosing the best toys for them is a concern of families and psychologists.

Playing is an activity in which a child derives so much pleasure and through which he gains control of certain processes and understands many facets of life. Through play a child gains knowledge of himself and the world around him. He learns how to behave with other children. Playing teaches children social, cognitive and oral skills. For example, by playing a child can build an imaginative skyscraper with the use of wooden blocks or draw with the use of colored pencils.

In general, a game can be: 1) Completely physical, like running and jumping, 2) Mental, like solving a puzzle and memorizing words or 3) Creative, like drawing pictures.

Playing creates new worlds for a child. It has great influence on childhood and increases a child's intelligence quotient (IQ). A child can manipulate the world around him and make it suit his cognitive abilities. He moves toward his fate through playing. Playing also improves a child's speaking and conversation abilities as well as his physical growth. It is a pleasurable activity to which a child may richly devote his time and follow with perseverance to the fullest. Playing makes children active, allows them to take part voluntarily in different activities and to discover their own identities, social rules and society expectations. There are different theories concerning playing. A few are enumerated as follows:

1. Friedrich Froebel, German educational reformer, emphasizes learning and gaining experience through playing. He believes that a child will be attracted to life by living with movable objects. He has divided toys into two groups: gifts or that which consists of cubes, globes and cylinders, and amusement which consists of things made from paper, wood, clay, etc. He believes a child can become familiar with the concepts of form, measure, number and balance by playing games.

2. Carl Grosz, German philosopher and writer, is the author of the theory of prepractice. According to the theory, playing is a prepractice. He defines playing as a preparatory activity, i.e., making children ready for life. It creates



the appropriate opportunity for children to practice and complete learning activities and skills for the next stage of life, that is, adolescence.

3. In Freud's belief, playing is an activity involving joy and pleasure. Playing involves behavior revealing children's dreams and needs for growth and maturing. Children make their own world through play. In games they can become doctors, bosses, teachers and whatever they like to be. They can shift a game's process and finish it in a manner they like. They themselves can decide the end of a game or story to suit their taste.

4. Erikson, American psychoanalyst, emphasizes stress on the process of growth. He believes that playing is a form of thinking applied to difficult situations and promoting a sense of dominance.

5. Herbert Spencer, English philosopher, presents the theory of excessive energy. He believes human beings are naturally active and energetic and playing is a way of discharging excess energy. He refers to human instinct as the origin of playing. He believes that excess energy is applied in playing and results in undeliberate joy.

6. Lazarus is the proponent of the theory of amusement, saying that playing creates an opportunity for calm and the regaining of intellectual powers.

Some psychologists believe that children play in order to revive scenes which were created by their ancestors during their lifetime. Most psychologists agree that playing is a prerequisite to learning. It accelerates the process of learning. Children freely experiment with their toys and gain experience on the basis of the results of their experiments.



Photo by Akbar Shahbazi

Obviously, paying attention to the kind of toys children play with is very important for their development in different environments — social, individual, group, cognitive, physical, etc.

Toys are children's instruments for playing. They are also said to be a child's best friend. They are an unseparable part of his life. They are one of the most important and influential instruments in forming character traits.

Providing children with



Photo by Buslenko Sergey

dangerous toys such as guns, knives, whips, tanks and grenades has the tendency of encouraging children's tendencies to quarrel and be compatible with such toys. One effect toys have on the minds of children is that they impart social values. Children get to be familiar with different social functions and activities through games. For example, when a child works with the tools of carpentry he becomes familiar with the work of a carpenter and the kind of tools he uses. In similar ways, it is easy to understand how cultural taste is affected by the kind of toys provided for children, influencing the child's choice of values, views, attitudes, fashion and physical appearance later in life.

Generally, people consider playing as a means of killing time. This is no more true than in the case of children attending school. Parents usually look upon the activity negatively and try to prevent them from playing. The fact is, playing less than enough deprives children of different opportunities and stunts their social growth. Children who shun play have the tendency to be introspective.

Playing is the most effective, meaningful and powerful way of learning. If one observes a child serious at play he will find that he is putting all his energy and skill to work. During a game, a child thinks, makes plans and innovates. He applies his physical power as well as mental power.

For kindergarten kids, playing is a form of training which works similar to experience or education in adults. The difference is that playing can be a child's main preoccupation which is not so with adults. Whatever values children may obtain from playing are generally positive for it leads to experience which is the result of the exercise of muscles and senses. In short, playing can provide the skills which make them ready to tackle their adult life.

Playing has physical, cognitive, sentimental, social, ethical, economic and therapeutic values. It also promotes a child's psychic health and makes him more adjustable to his environment.



The movement of muscles and their conditioning in activities such as running, jumping and walking are the physical values of playing.

One popular theory in psychology is that playing enhances intellectual development. There are those who are inclined to believe that children who do not have enough toys or recreational facilities fall intellectually behind others who do later in life. Some psychologists also believe that one of the reasons for some learning problems in children is the lack of playing opportunities afforded to them in childhood. On the other hand, those who have engaged in games that emphasize discovery skills during their preschool age tend to be more independent, curious and successful during their schooling period.

Playing helps a child understand and control the world around him and to differentiate between the real world and the world of imagination. It enables him to compare his capabilities with that of others, encouraging a healthy spirit of competition. It also enables him to develop satisfactory relations with others.

Playing is also important in making children gregarious. A child through group playing understands the role and value of other children. He understands



that in order to be an acceptable character he should be honest, fair and serious. He understands the meaning of fair play. This is the ethical aspect of playing. Playing enhances the senses of responsibility, friendship, respect, kindness, contribution, politeness, discipline and cooperation which are the ethical bases of adult activities.

While at play a child also learns how to display feelings and sentiments in different situations. Affection displayed among children discourages the development of stress and anxiety.

It can also be a treatment approach. A child during play has enough time to reveal his feelings of anxiety, deprivation, distrust, fear, amazement and distress. Game therapy is the effective means of working with children who have psychological problems. It is a means of escaping children's needs and cravings which have not been met. According to researches performed by some psychological groups, toys much in demand in our country are dolls of various kinds and cars with remote control systems. Toys in low demand are the mechanical, bulky cars and black-colored dolls. Prices, packing, quality and physical appearance of toys are the most important factors determining customer satisfaction and selling rate.

It is not uncommon to see a girl at play imitating the appearance or way of dressing of her dolls. A boy at play with guns and knives tends to mimic hostile actions like highjacking, murder, kidnapping. Personal choices and behavior patterns are, therefore, highly influenced by the kind of toys a child plays with.

It is the responsibility of toy makers to study and undertake needed research to come up with the kind of toys that have a positive effect on children. What the country needs are toys that promote creativity, enhances the development of skills and improves the mental alertness of children. It is to be noted that toys also have an effect on the cultural development of children. By encouraging the purchase of Iranian-made toys over those made abroad we will be showing the superiority of our cultural values over those of foreign countries and helping pass them on to the next generation.

In recent days some positive steps have been taken by responsible authorities to change the typical American doll — the Barbie — with an Iranian version — Sara and Dara. Furthermore, producers and responsible authorities should endeavor to make prices of toys within reach of the average Iranian family in order to enable such family to avail of them. Last but not the least, it is the responsibility of parents to choose appropriate toys for their children as dictated by their budget and their children's disposition, characteristics, feelings, sex, interests, and intellectual development. As a word of advice: toys which promote children's creativity and make them active physically take the upperhand.

[illegible] of Sacrifice in Islam

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Eid-ul-Azha, also called Eid-ul-Kabir, because it is a day of sacrifice, is celebrated by the Muslims the world over. It commemorates the historic sacrifice made by Hazrat Ibrahim and lays stress on the fact that real happiness and true joy are not to be sought in the acquisition of wealth, that it is not acquiring but giving away freely what one has that makes for sublimation of the spirit.

The festival is also a conformation of faith that man's unique place in the order of God's creation is earned through absolute and unquestioned submission to Allah's will and a total rejection of doubt and disbelief in the fulfillment of His commands. *"Say, my prayers, my sacrifices, my living and my dying are all for Allah the Lord of the universe."* (6.163): This verse of the Holy Qoran beautifully sums up the quintessence of the spirit of Islam.

Edi-ul-Azha is one of the two canonical festivals in Islam. The word "Azha" is the plural of "Azhat," meaning sacrifice hence this Eid is called the festival of sacrifice.

Hazrat Ibrahim once dreamt that he was himself sacrificing his dearest and only son, Hazrat Ismail. He discussed this dream with his son, and taking it as a pointer from God, he readily undertook to translate his dream into reality. He took his son, Ismail to the Hill of Merwah near the House of God in Mecca. When he was about to sacrifice his son, a providential intervention took place and a ram was substituted for sacrifice.

What God intended was to put Hazrat Ibrahim to a test, so that this supreme manifestation of the faith in God and unquestioned acceptance of His will may be set forth as a beacon light and inspiration to all men, women of faith and goodwill.

The unquestioned submission and the unshakable resolve to obey Allah without any thought of self and the possibility of capitulating to the paternal instinct, vindicated Hazrat Ibrahim's title of Khalilullah (Friend of God). It is in the commemoration of this supreme sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim in the way of God on the tenth of Zelhajjeh that the Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with marked enthusiasm and due solemnity.

The festival also serves to reduce the economic inequalities and build up a contented society, sensitive to the needs of the have-nots. The believers offer in sacrifice a sheep, a goat, a cow or a camel. The flesh of sacrificial animals is divided into three portions: one-third being given to relatives, one-third to the poor and the remaining one-third is consumed by the family.

With a view to ensuring the solidarity of the Muslim community for all times to come, the men of wealth needed to be taught to share the benefits of their worldly possessions with the poor and the needy.

What was more, this process of parting with wealth to ameliorate the sufferings of the poor and the destitute was to be accompanied by a restraint on emotion, because the sacrifice would not involve a mere dispossession of an object, but would involve the killing of domestic animal for the purpose of distributing its meat among those who needed it.

What God intended was to put Hazrat Ibrahim to a test, so that this supreme manifestation of the faith in God and unquestioned acceptance of His will may be set forth as a beacon light and inspiration to all men and women of faith and goodwill.

Obviously, the act was intended to symbolize the social obligations of the owners of private property held by them as a gift from God to be used in the manner and to the extent God has prescribed.

Eid-ul-Azha strengthens the egalitarian aspect of Islam against any tendency on the part of its followers to develop individualism to an extent which would shatter their essential unity as believers.

Man's emotional attachment to his wealth, and his unwillingness to part with it in the interests of society as a whole proved the most powerful obstacle to the creation of an egalitarian society envisaged by Islam, and it was through sacrifice on the occasion of this festival that this tendency was sought to be curbed.

The Qoranic concept of sacrifice centers on the selfless and the humble so that it becomes the binding force which keeps human personality in readiness for withstanding evil.

The institution of sacrifice in Islam is not only in commemoration of the historic event of Hazrat Ibrahim's submission to the will of Allah but also in perfect consonance with the universal practice of sacrifice as enunciated and propounded by almost all the major religions of the world.

Animal sacrifice has been practiced by almost all religions of yore, but Islam has given new meaning to it. It was practiced in the past mostly to pacify revengeful goods.

Islam did not consider animal sacrifice as a means of appeasing an offended deity or as an atonement of sin. In Islam sacrifice is an outward symbol of man's readiness to lay down even his life, if need be, for the sake of God and to sacrifice all his interests and ambitions in the cause of truth and righteousness.

The basic philosophy of sacrifice according to the Holy Qoran, is love of God and the establishment of truth.

As a living institution, it is designed to give the Muslims the world over an annual opportunity to realize their oneness in faith. Says the Holy Qoran: *"And to every nation, We appointed a ritual that they may mention the name of Allah over the beast of cattle that He has given them for food."* (22:34)

Islam invests this institution with a deep philosophy. The killing of an animal is only symbolic. It represents the killing of every animal instinct in man and his wild and unchecked passions, lusts and desires — nay, the voluntary extinction and self abasement of his entire being in communion with the Divine Being. This prepares the Believers to consider no sacrifice great, when the occasion warrants, in the cause of truth and justice, which is the cause of Allah.

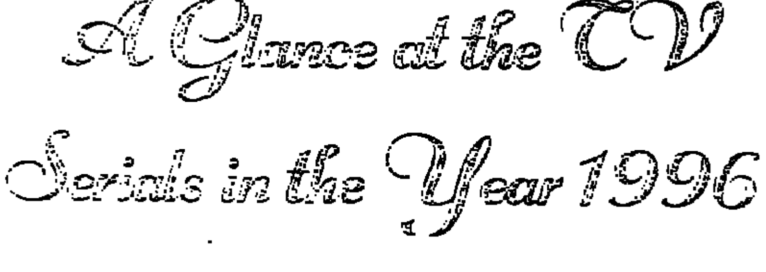
The Holy Qoran makes the intention behind the sacrifice of animals clear in the verse which says: *"It is not their flesh nor their blood that reaches Allah, but to Him is acceptable righteousness on your part."* (22:37)

The slaughter of animals is a constant reminder of the motive behind the hollowed practice of sacrifice, and not just a rite of custom. Only those who have spiritual insight can sense and feel its impact. It is a great example of piety, devolution to high purpose and the spirit of sacrifice — the spirit to forge personal possession for the larger good and to rise above material temptations.

The Eid, which also marks the annual celebration of laying the foundation of Ka'ba, the House of God, highlights the supremacy of spiritual attainments over material considerations. And the emotion of one brotherhood, to which all Muslims belong becomes remarkably pronounce on this occasion.



A view from Imam Ali (AS) serial



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — In the year 1996, the Iranian national TV broadcast some ten new serials along with three reruns for its five channels. The most important and the most costly one was *Imam Ali* (AS) directed by Davood Mir Baqeri.

The serial was a professional work and very attractive. Apart from the technical and positive attractions of the serial, the people's profound interest to the subject matter and the infallible character of Imam Ali (AS) was another determinant factor behind the popularity of the serial.

Imam Ali (AS) serial pictures four years of Imam Ali's (AS) government from the assassination of Othman, the second caliph, to Imam's martyrdom. During those four years Imam Ali (AS) was busy fighting his enemies thus had no opportunity to really rule the Islamic society. It seems that the serial is mainly focusing on the Imam's military struggles rather than his life. It would be still more interesting had it pictured Imam's life from the very childhood to the time of his martyrdom.

Music of the serial, composed by Farhad Fakhroddini, is one of the brightest elements of the serial.

The *Imam Ali* (AS) serial sparked harsh arguments among Shia and Sunni in the cinematic society and religious centers, thus some parts had to be censured. The reductions damaged the whole serial.

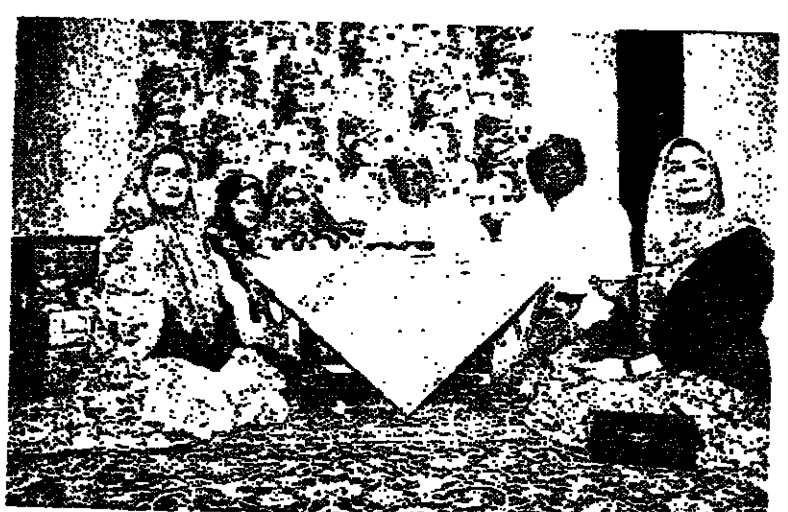
The other successful serial of last year was *"Dar Panah-e Tou"* (In Thy Shelter) directed by Hamid Labkhandeh. This family melodrama pictures a love triangle. The young buxom and handsome actresses and actors, with their sentimental acts, caught the young strata immensely.

Introducing a few new actors and actresses, (La'ya Zanganeh, Hasan Joharchi, etc.) who played in feature films later, are indicative of the their efficient acts in the serial.

Khaneye Sabz (The Green House) made by Bijan Birang and Masoud Rassam, a couple who introduced a new style in TV serial-making with their popular *Hamsaraan* (The Mates), developed the same social style in their new product.

Having in the crew, the best actor of feature films, Khosro Shakibaie, and a poetic and social view toward family relations make *The Green House* very successful.

Dozdan-e Maadarbozorg (Kidnappers of Grandma) directed by Mehdi Sabbaghzadeh, the able feature film director, condemns materiality and encourages spirituality. The serial could be packed in four episodes, rather it was prolonged to 25 episodes. The music was an adaptation of one of the most beautiful Iranian pieces reproduced by Sa'id Mohammadi Motlaq.



An indoor shot from The Same Color as Shell

The story is simple but attractive: An old woman is kidnapped by three amateur kidnappers for ransom. The old woman works on them to bring them into the right path, and she meets their material needs. She does the task successfully. On the whole, the serial was a collection of strong and weak points.

Kaaragaah (The Detective) directed by Hasan Hedayat was a detective serial whose setting dated back to the early years of Pahlavi dynasty. *The Detective* enjoyed interesting episodes and a strong screenplay along with acceptable stage setting. Slow rhythm was the only weak point of the serial.

Berang-e Sadaf (The Same Color as Shell) with hurried casts, weak directions, was unsuccessful in safeguarding the dignity of Hijab.

Khane dar Aatash (The House on Fire), with various ups and downs on social delinquency and drug addiction was also unsuccessful and carried no artistic view.

Gordoh-e Najaat (The Rescue Crew), which was a very very weak adaptation of the American serial *Emergency*, pictured the events in a successful fire station. In *The Rescue Crew* The nonprofessional actors, the director's lack of sufficient knowledge on action movies, and a lot more made the TV watchers totally bored.

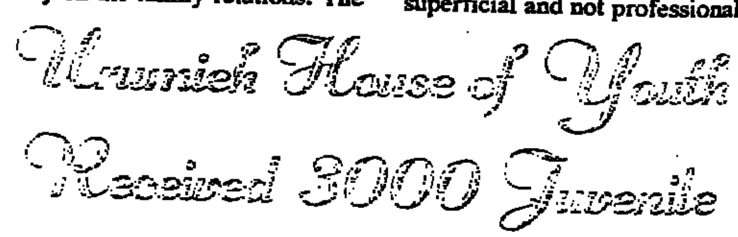
Nou'e Deegar (In an Other Way), with the artist couple Behrooz Baqaie and Parastoo Golestani, casts a psychological study on the family relations. The whole work is clear-cut, effective and successful.



Shakibaie (R), Rambod Javan (C) and Daryoush Asadzadeh in a view of The Green House

Last year the IRIB broadcast three reruns with English subtitles, *Hezaar Dastan*, *Kouchek Jangali* and *Sarzamin-e Man va Neqaabdaran* (My Land and the Masked), of which the last one was terrible. All the three serials required a lot of patience even in their first broadcast let alone the reruns.

Generally speaking, the majority of TV serials last year were superficial and not professional.



Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — During last year 3000 juvenile enjoyed the facilities of Urumieh House of Youth, newspapers reported yesterday.

The House of Youth in Urumieh is a complex which organizes cultural, artistic, educational, religious and consulting activities for the young strata of this border province.

The house was inaugurated in 1995 by President Hashemi Rafsanjani and started formal work since the year 1996. Considering the built and land area, Urumieh House of Youth is unique in the country. It has 2820 members.

The complex offers various services to the young strata rang-

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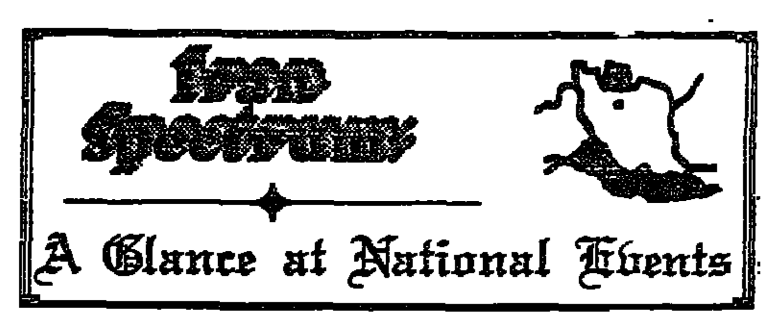


A Glance at International Events

TEHRAN TIMES

Tehran Times Weekend Issue

THU. APR. 17, 1997; FARVARDIN 28, 1376; ZIL-HAJJEH 9, 1417



The World This Week

WORLD IN HIGHLIGHT

Tuesday, April 8

Warring Zairean Factions Agree on Need for Cease-Fire

Warring Zairean parties agreed on the need for a cease-fire to end six-month-old civil war, a joint statement released after four days of peace talk said.

Congress Denies Peace Talks With Indian Government



India's Congress Party denied it would hold formal peace talks with the ruling coalition to end a political crisis threatening to topple the government.

NAM Conference Calls For Freeze of Relations With Israel

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) wound up a conference by calling for "democratic" United Nations reforms and a freeze on relations with Israel in an attempt to tackle the Middle East peace process crisis.

Wednesday, April 9

New Clashes Break Out in Al-Khalil



Thousands of protesters marched behind the flag-shrouded body of a Palestinian killed by Israeli troops, calling for revenge and suicide attacks against Israelis. New clashes broke out following the funeral.

Sri Lankan Navy Pounds Tiger Coastal Bases

A flotilla of navy gunboats launched a surprise pre-dawn attack against a coastal base of Tamil Tiger guerrillas in northeastern Sri Lanka, defense officials said.

Thursday, April 10

Yeltsin Lashes Corruption, Graft, Urges Reforms

President Boris Yeltsin lashed out at corruption as a threat to the security of Russia and said he was sure his government would win the age-old battle against graft.

Shots Exchanged on Korean Border Before Cohen Visit

North and South Korean troops exchanged warning shots at their tense border shortly before U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen flew to the area, U.S. and South Korean officials said.

Friday, April 11

Mobutu Aide Hits Back at U.S., Refuses Response to Rebel Ultimatum



A top aide to President Mobutu Sese Seko hit out at U.S. suggestions that the embattled Zairean leader's rule was all but over, as pressure continued to build on Mobutu to cut a deal with rebel forces sweeping across the country.

Seminar on Muslim Unity Opened in Mecca

A seminar Muslim Unity opened and philosophers and Islamic experts from 17 countries surveyed ways for unifying the Muslims ranks.

Angola Inaugurates Reconciliation Gov't After Long, Bloody War

An inauguration ceremony began for a new government of national reconciliation after two decades of civil war in which 500,000 people died.

Saturday, April 12

Mobutu Rejects Rebel Ultimatum



Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko rejected an ultimatum from rebel leader Laurent Kabila, who had Wednesday given him three days "to relinquish power."

Coalition Collapses, Government Refuses to Take a Back Seat

India moved a step closer to fresh general elections when the country's ousted government said it would only take part in a new coalition as the lead player.

Al-Khalil Faces Fifth Consecutive Day of Clashes



At least three Palestinians were wounded by rubber bullets fired by Israeli soldiers in the fifth consecutive day of clashes in the divided West Bank town of Al-Khalil.

Sunday, April 13

Peres, Netanyahu Discuss Forming Unity Government



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and opposition leader Shimon Peres discussed forming a unity Government to deal with Israel-Palestinian negotiations to reach a final status agreement Israeli media reported.

Pope Appeals to Bosnian Leaders for Peace, Reconciliation



Pope John Paul II appealed to Bosnians to foster forgiveness and transform Sarajevo from a symbol of suffering into a model of coexistence.

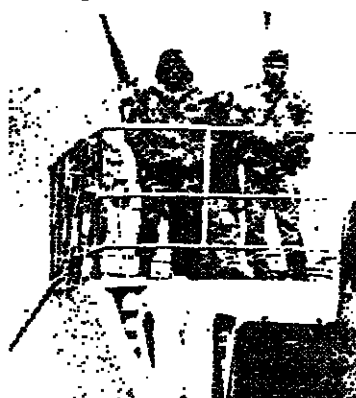
British Police Battle Protesters in Central London



Environmental activists battled with police in riot gear in central London after a march calling for greater social justice turned violent.

Monday, April 14

Signs of Normality Return to Vlore



Signs of normality were returning to this rebel-town ahead of the imminent deployment of international military forces to secure the port for aid deliveries.

Tuesday, April 15

Some 1,200 Troops to Land in Albania

Nearly 1,200 Italian, French and Spanish troops will land in Albania at the start of an Italian-led security mission to the Balkan country, Italy said.

IRAN IN HIGHLIGHT

Tuesday, April 8

Leader Receives Members of Assembly of Expediency of Islamic System

The Assembly for Determining the Expediency of the Islamic System convened its first meeting in the presence of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei who gave its members guidelines for the future functioning of the assembly.

MRI Equipment Installed in Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tabriz

Concurrent with the visit to Tabriz Province of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Megnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) equipment were installed in Imam Khomeini Hospital in the province.

Wednesday, April 9

Tajikistan Peace Negotiations Opens in Tehran



A new round of Tajikistan Peace negotiations opened with participation of Tajik Foreign Minister Talbek Nazarov, Representative of Tajik opposition Akbar Turjanzadeh and the UN special envoy for Tajikistan Gerd Diettrich Merrem.

Thursday, April 10

German Court's Statements Unfounded

The Foreign Ministry Spokesman, Mahmoud Mohammadi said that the statements made by the German court judge against Iran were unfounded and influenced by political propaganda campaign launched against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Friday, April 11

Protestors Call For German Official Apology



President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in his Friday prayer sermons denounced decision of the German court in the so-called Mykonos trial as politically motivated and called it a historical disgrace for the German judicial system.

Up to 7 Million Children to Be Vaccinated Against Polio



The first phase of the fourth round of nation-wide vaccination against polio started with its second phase slated for May 9.

Saturday, April 12

Habibi Named Secretary of Expediency Council

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani named First Voce President Hassan Habibi as the secretary of the Expediency Council, IRAN reported.

Sunday, April 13

Majlis Calls For Review of Tehran-Bonn Relations

Members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) called for fully revision of Tehran's relations with Bonn.

Monday, April 14

Leader Stresses Presence of Muslim Ummah in International Scene

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a message to the Hajj pilgrims stressed unity among the Islamic *Ummah* as well as proper utilization of their potentials to obtain the status Muslims deserve.

Are you creative? If you're like most people, you probably think you're not. Throughout our lives, we're told that creativity is rare and mysterious, that only artists are creative, that it's a "right brain" function, what ever that means.

After nearly 20 years of laboratory research, however, I've concluded that creativity is within everyone's reach — no exception.

Indeed, in recent years I've successfully applied some lessons of the laboratory in real-life settings with children and teacher, parents and corporate executives.

To unleash your creative potential, master these strategies. They may be all that stand between you and some of the most creative people in history.

Capturing. New ideas are fleeting, like rabbits streaking through your consciousness. If you don't grab them quickly, they're usually gone forever. People who are serious about exploring their creative side have learned ways to heed and preserve their new ideas. They have "capturing" skills.

Salvador Dali, the great surrealist, used to grab ideas for paintings from the fertile semisleep state called hypnagogic. He'd sit in an armchair with a key in one hand and hold it over a plate placed on the floor. When he drifted off to sleep, the sound of the key hitting the plate would awaken him. Immediately, he'd sketch the bizarre images he was seeing.

We all have incredible perceptual experiences in the moments before we fall fully asleep. Dali simply developed a way to seize some of them.

Artists carry sketch pads. Inventors and writers carry note pads or laptop computers, or make notes on napkins and candy wrappers.

Here's one simple exercise I've developed to persuade people of their creative potential. I call it "capturing a daydream":

Close your eyes. Let your mind wander freely for a few minutes. Relax and just let your thoughts go without deliberately guiding them. Did you leave the room? Leave the earth? Drift off to the stars? Given enough time and no distractions, everyone sees, hears or experiences things impossible to experience in reality.

I've conducted this exercise all over the world, including Japan, where, perhaps for cultural reasons, few people claim to be creative. But after a few minutes, Japanese audiences report daydreams every bit as rich as Salvador Dali's. Said one man: "I flew to the top of the building next door and saw this building crumble to the ground while I ate a sandwich." (IBM was located next door. Was he hoping for a better job?)

Capturing is easier in certain setting and at certain times. For some people, the three B's of creativity — bed, bath and bus — are

Four ways to jump-start your mind

particularly fertile, especially if you keep writing materials handy in those locations. Others need to sit by a pool or in a lonely cabin in the woods.

Challenging. One way to accelerate the flow of new ideas is to put yourself in difficult situations where you're likely to fail. Surprisingly, failure can be a wellspring of creativity — if properly managed.

Typically, when we fail to do something, we feel frustrated and — most important for creativity — we begin trying out other behaviors. Many ideas compete vigorously, greatly enhancing the creative process.

Say you start to turn a doorknob budge. You turn the knob harder. Then you pull it up or push it down. Maybe you wiggle it. Eventually, you may shove the door with your shoulder or shout for help. These efforts — culled from established behaviors — will probably lead to new solutions. Creativity, in short is not mystical: it's an extension of what you already know.

"Ultimate problems" — open-ended challenges that have no solutions — can also be used to accelerate creative output. So we really want to place ourselves in frustrating situations? Emphatically, yes! If you're feeling stymied, you're in the company of the greatest poets, composers and inventors of all time. More likely than not, you're on the verge of a new idea.

With children, friends or colleagues, try spending 15 minutes a week solving one of these:

* Become a mollionaire — in a week.

* Fix it so that you'll never have to do another household chore.

* Change your miserable local climate. (And, no, you can't move away!)

* Aging is a drug. Eliminate it.

You won't find solutions, of course, but these unsolvable challenges will stimulate lots of interesting new ideas.

Creativity, in short is not mystical: it's an extension of what you already know.

Broadening. The more knowledge you have and the more diverse that knowledge is, the greater your potential for creative output.

In the 1940s Swiss engineer Grorge de Mestral was returning experiment to create artificial "hook and loops." The final product — Velcro — blended years of training as an engineer and his curiosity about botany.

Countless advances were made possible because their creators had experience in diverse fields. If you want to enhance your own creativity, learn about subjects you know nothing about—and don't want to from the woods when he became annoyed by small burs attached to his pants. Under a microscope he saw small "hooks" on the burs that had grabbed loops of fiber in the cloth. Using his experiences in many fields, De Mestral began to know about. If you normally read only mystery novels, pick up a history book. If you usually come home and put a basketball game on TV, turn to one of the educational channels instead. In the car, scan your radio bands for a new and unfamiliar program.

With new creative powers, we're all better able to solve the little problems that beset us daily.

Surrounding. Finally, you can enhance your creativity by surrounding yourself with diverse stimuli — and, even more important, by changing those stimuli regularly.

Put unusual items on your desk in the morning — a Mickey Mouse hat, pliers, a candle — or just rearrange a few things in your room. Diverse and ever-changing stimuli help promote diverse and ever-changing ideas.

How you interact with others is another from of creative "surrounding." Brainstorming, for example, works to some extent because it exposes team participants to multiple stimuli. But it also inhibits creativity by exposing individuals to disapproval.

In my research, I've found that a "shifting" group — one that shifts back and froth from private sessions to team meetings — typically generates twice as many ideas as the brainstorming group. Why? Because creativity is always an individual process.

WITH NEW CREATIVE POWERS, we're all better able to solve the little problems that beset us daily. The resulting explosion of ideas and accomplishments could make those of the Renaissance look like a ride on a stationary bicycle.

(Courtesy the Psychology Today)

Chelsea Buns

You will need ...	**6 oz. plain flour**
	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
	1 egg, beaten
	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. butter, melted
	For the yeast liquid:
Preparation time	**2 level teaspoons**
20-25 minutes	**dried yeast**
	$\frac{1}{4}$ pint warm
	milk less 3 tablespoons
	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar
Cooking time	**2 oz. plain flour**
30-35 minutes	***For the filling:***
	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. butter, melted
Oven setting	**2 oz. soft brown sugar**
375°F; gas mark 5	**3 oz. currants**
	1 oz. mixed peel, chopped
	honey for glazing

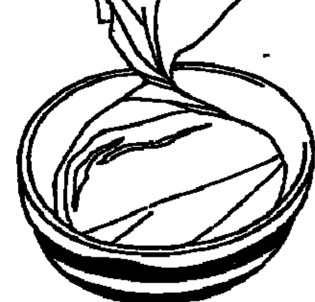
Blend yeast with warm milk (110°F), sugar and 2 oz. flour. Leave until frothy, about 20-30 minutes. Mix remaining flour and salt together. Add to yeast mixture with beaten egg and melted butter, mix well. Knead dough on a lightly floured table for about 10 minutes.

Put to rise in a large greased polythene bag, loosely tied, until double in size. Remove polythene; knead well on a lightly floured table and roll into a rectangle approximately 9 inches by 12 inches. Brush with remaining butter and sprinkle on sugar and fruit. Roll up as for a Swiss roll and seal edge. Cut into 9 slices. Place in a greased 7-inch square cake tin, cut side down. Leave to rise inside a greased polythene bag until dough feels springy.

Remove polythene bag. Bake in a moderately hot oven for 30-35 minutes. Place on a wire tray and glaze hot buns with a wet brush dipped in honey.

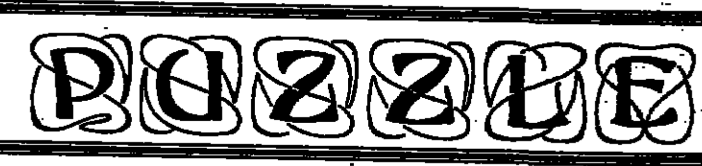
QUICK TIP

Always cover dough well during rising to prevent a skin forming on the surface. Use a lightly greased polythene sheet or bag, a large saucepan or mixing bowl covered with a lid.



Where Was the First Cashpoint Machine?

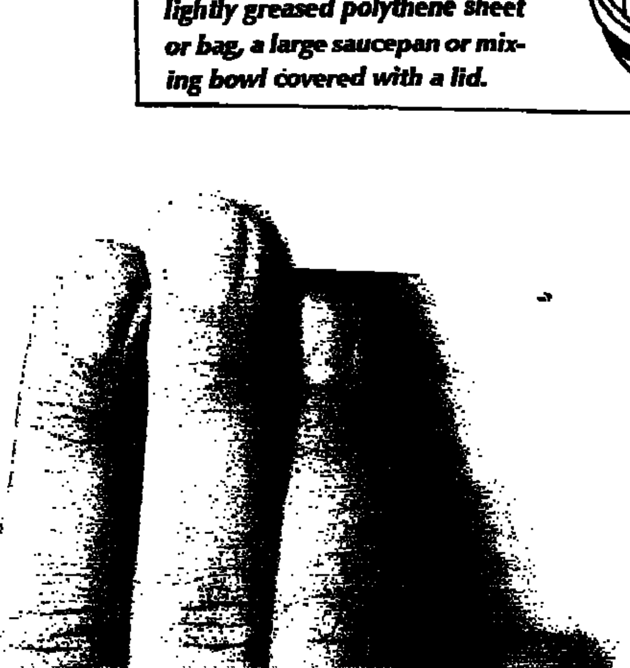
At the Enfield branch of Barclays, on 27 June 1967, and the first man to use it was... Reg Varney of *On The Buses* fame (a celebrity opening if ever there was one). Customers could use a voucher — not a card — to take out the princely sum of £10 in cash. Now in place all around the world, the cashpoint machine was a British innovation.



WORLD TRAVELERS

S	F	R	A	N	C	E	E	G	A	U	G	N	A	L
W	R	E	N	G	I	E	R	O	F	E	L	N	E	D
Q	I	S	P	O	B	D	A	C	I	R	F	A	D	R
C	E	H	J	U	T	O	D	W	X	C	V	R	I	I
A	N	O	S	G	K	C	A	E	F	E	Z	R	U	V
N	D	P	V	P	A	K	O	T	O	U	R	I	G	E
A	S	D	C	A	M	E	R	A	N	M	C	V	I	G
D	T	L	F	C	S	U	L	H	S	D	N	E	P	S
A	O	L	U	K	S	E	I	B	K	I	D	Q	P	M
C	P	E	Z	T	I	X	A	T	O	O	A	S	U	S
I	H	T	S	E	G	U	R	M	O	N	E	Y	O	O
A	C	O	S	T	H	A	N	F	B	P	J	V	R	T
M	L	H	J	O	T	I	Y	N	A	M	R	E	G	O
A	N	I	H	C	S	N	L	E	T	O	M	S	G	H
J	E	P	O	R	U	E	T	R	O	P	S	S	A	P

AFRICA
ARRIVE
ASIA
BOAT
BOOKS
BUS
CAMERA
CANADA
CHINA
COST
DOCK
DRIVE
EUROPE
FOOD
FOREIGNER
FRANCE
FRIENDS
GERMANY
GROUP
GUIDE
HOTEL
JAMAICA
LANGUAGE
LEAVE
LOST
MONEY
MOTEL
PACK
PASSPORT
PHOTOS
RAILROAD
SHOP
SIGHTS
SPEND
STOP
TAXI
TOUR





Feature

Facets of Countries

Spotlight: *Niger and Burkina Faso*

Lessons From the Continent



Holes in arid Burkina Faso and Niger rural lands indicate a special farming technique: each hole is treated with manure before the crop is planted.



Beaming Burkina Faso children beaming after obtaining water.

For so many years South Africa was cut off from the rest of Africa, and therefore unable to learn the lessons that others had already gone through.

Recently, however, a number of South African NGOs undertook a unique study tour of West Africa to learn about how rural people on this part of the continent manage the land they live on.

Said the tour coordinator: "This tour was an opportunity for us in South Africa—who are constantly struggling with this concept of people and the land—to learn about people working through programs to rehabilitate the land."

Niger and Burkina Faso, two countries completely dependent on agriculture, are both faced with the main problem of encroachment of the desert. They have other resources such as gold, silver and uranium, but the finances to exploit them don't exist.

Water remains a crucial issue for the rural people of Niger, with water needed for the country's 12 million livestock and 22,000 villages. Often the water used by animals in this semi-arid country is also drunk by humans. Word has it that Niger is hoping that South Africa will be able to help develop water points in 9,000 villages.

One of the less obvious consequences of this dire shortage of water—but nevertheless the cause of many wars around the world—is that it carries an inherent potential for conflict. With no water in the north, people and their animals will move south and increase the chances of that conflict becoming a reality.

A final point made by the NGO study program—and very relevant to the country today—was that there is no fixed formula for land management policies in Burkina Faso. "Different models work for different villages and it's left to the villagers to draft their own models." (Courtesy of *On Track*, Oct./Nov. 1995.)

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Referring to your article "Lake Urumieh, Beautiful and Serene," which appeared in your March 6, 1997 issue, I'd like to make some correction.

Urumieh or "Urmia" is an Assyrian word which means "The Place of Water" (Ur=water; mia=place). Urmia Lake is the biggest salty lake of the world. It occupies an area just slightly bigger than the Great Salt Lake in Utah (USA).

The average salinity of the lake's water changes at various places and periods: during wet periods salinity declines and during dry periods it goes up.

A few living organisms are able to tolerate saline water and fish, shrimps, as well as other crustaceans don't, except brine shrimps (Artemia). Brine shrimps are custaceans belonging to a sub-phylum of Arthropoda. Its length and weight reaches up to 2 cm and 20 mg respectively.

Artemia are useful in aquaculture. Adult and newly hatched artemia are good food for fry.

Besides Artemia different species of phytoplanktons exist in Lake Urumieh and so it isn't really a dead water body.

The presence of wild animals in the islands such as Armenian sheep in Kaboodan and the endangered species, the Persian fallow deer (Cervus dama mezopotamica), should not be overlooked. The Persian fallow deer's natural habitat is found only in Iran.

Sincerely yours,

Mehdi Shakouri

(Aquaculturist) Tehran

Israel's Moral Divide

Should the gay lover of an army colonel be entitled to [illegible] widowed spouse?

Israel is on the cutting edge of many issues, beginning with war and peace. Its citizens hotly debate everything from new housing in East Jerusalem to Sara Netanyahu's globe-trotting with her husband. Now the debate is on changing sexual patterns.

The orthodox Jewish religion maintains that homosexuality is an abomination in the eyes of God. Hence, until recently, matters concerning secuality were talked about in hushed tones. That attitude may now be changing, due in part to a one-man crusade fought by *Adir Steiner*, a young public relations consultant from Tel Aviv.

Steiner, 30, is unusual in that for eight years he lived openly with his lover, Col. Doron Maisel, who died in 1991 at the age of 46 from cancer. By all accounts, Maisel, divorced with three daughters, was a man of exceptional character and ability.

He had been head of the Israel Defense Force's (IDF) sole medical training base, and was a serious contender to head the Medical Corps itself. He was a personal friend of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, dining several times at his home. The Rabins were fully aware of his relationship with Steiner, though young Adir never joined them for dinner. Maisel's strongest backer in the IDF was the then head of the army's southern command, General Yitzhak Mordechai, currently Israeli Minister of Defense, who secured his promotion to full colonel.

Mordechai was also aware that Maisel was gay and lived openly with his young lover. At Maisel's burial service, he was one of the more prominent mourners who attended.

In short, Israel's military and political establishment appeared to have little problem with the colonel and his lover, sending Maisel to the U.S. for medical treatment and paying for Steiner to accompany him. Until recently, Israeli civil law held that homosexual acts were illegal. The law, however, was rarely enforced. Moreover, the IDF did not specifically bar gays from military service, though they were generally excluded—an attitude that reflected Israeli society in general. Thus, when Steiner applied for the benefits owed the spouse of a fallen soldier, the IDF refused to grant him Maisel's pension and other benefits.

Stung into action, Steiner studied the legal system intensively for one year, planning his strategy, and in 1994, filed three suits against the government and the IDF. Lawyers flatly told him he had no legal chance even if he had a strong moral case.

Three years—and ten lawyers—later, Steiner's persistence has paid off. In January, a Tel Aviv appeals court ruled that the IDF must recognize him as Maisel's surviving spouse and grant him the benefits to which he is entitled. The IDF has appealed the decision to the Jerusalem District Court and appears ready to take the case to the Supreme Court for a definitive ruling.

Steiner's personal crusade may well have a fundamental effect on Israeli society. The Supreme Court is almost certain to take into account the country's rapidly changing social and moral attitudes. In the Steiner case, the court could hand down a decision granting gays and lesbians across the board the same social benefits as heterosexuals.

Much has changed already. The IDF is prohibited from asking draftees about their sexual orientation, and openly gay soldiers serve with little or no harassment.

Not everyone agrees with the trend. When Israeli President Ezer Weizman recently condemned homosexuals at a high school, there was such a public outcry that he was forced to issue an apology and receive a four-member delegation of gays at his official residence. Among them was Adir Steiner. Says Steiner: "...I'm entitled to weep at memorial ceremonies, but when it comes to receiving pension benefits...they don't recognize me." (Courtesy of *Time*, March 17, 1997.)



Adir Steiner tends the grave of his partner, Col. Doron Maisel (R), who died in 1991.

Many English words, as you know, have double meanings. For example, the word "tender" can mean "to present" and also "sympathetic." For each set of two definitions in the following list, see if you can supply one good word fulfilling both definitions.

1. Humble — to intend 2. Noise — robust 3. To land — buoyant 4. To cram — a preserve 5. Balancer — to climb 6. Powdered — fix firmly 7. To wail — sharp 8. Establisher — to sink 9. To yearn — lengthy 10. To press — golfer's gadget 11. Nobleman — look closely 12. A bird — complain bitterly

(Answers will appear next week.)

Simple

I was trying to teach my seven-year-old son the meaning of collective nouns. "Knives, forks and spoons are cutlery," I said. "Apples, oranges and pears are fruit. Now, what would carrots, onions and turnips be?" "Soup," was his reply.

Unhappy Ending

The pre-schoolers were hushed and expectant as the teacher neared the end of the story of the frog and the princess. "And what do you think happened when the princess kissed the frog?" she asked. There was a brief silence, then a confident voice piped up, "She got a wart."

Spare Parts

When a repairman took our television set away for major overhaul, our five-year-old was horrified. "Never mind," I said. "You can use your ears and listen to the radio instead." He thought for a moment and then asked, "But what can I do with my eyes?"

TODAY IN HISTORY

1961 — Cuba is invaded at "Bay of Pigs" by rebel forces which are defeated by Fidel Castro.

1973 — Cambodia's President Lon Nol announces resignation of his cabinet and appeals to all political groups to take part in council to solve nation's problems.

1975 — Communists take over rule of Cambodia's capital of Phnom Penh as Cambodian war draws to end.

1988 — Population control group says Earth faces environmental catastrophe unless developing nations stem rapid over population.

1989 — Afghanistan forces dislodge rebels from major land routes.

1992 — Russian lawmakers refuse to approve arms control pact setting up another confrontation with Boris Yeltsin.

1993 — The ANC and police sign an agreement aimed at preventing violence during marches to honor slain activist Chris Hani in Johannesburg.

CANDID CAMERA

TOMORROW IN HISTORY

1864 — Danish forces are defeated at Duppel, and German troops invade Denmark.

1906 — Earthquake rocks San Francisco, California, touching off fires that almost destroy city, and about 700 people perish.

1912 — Turkey announce closure of Dardanelles Straits to shipping.

1927 — Split develops in Kuomintang Party between Chiang Kai-Shek and radical elements.

1942 — U.S. bombers led by Lieutenant General James Doolittle attack Tokyo and other Japanese cities in World War II.

1949 — Republic of Eire is formally proclaimed in Dublin.

1957 — Representatives of Burma, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Japan and Syria attend first meeting in New Delhi of Asian Legal Consultative Committee.

1976 — About 40,000 Israelis march into occupied West Bank area of Jordan, demanding that Israel annex the territory.

THE CHAIR

By Jennie Nash

I bought a chair and it changed my life. Suddenly, through the most unexpected means, I feel rooted. There now exists a specific place that is the center of my universe.

I FIRST SPOTTED the chair in the window of a store that I frequently walk by. From the moment I laid eyes on it, I felt that gut-level rush of desire that stops you in your tracks and makes your mouth go slack — like falling in love for the first time. I wanted that chair.

Called a lady's reading chair by the store owner, it was an upholstered armchair in a slightly scaled-down size, with rounded arms, an overstuffed cushion and a gracefully arched back. The chair had been given new life by a brash combination of brick-red ticking and flowered brocade.

I did not need a lady's reading chair, however. What I needed, I was about to get: my first house. A few years past newly married and a year past the birth of my first child, I was convinced that it was time to live in a place that was mine.

Rob and I were three weeks from closing on our house when I spotted the chair. Every penny of our savings has been accounted for, and our future earnings were allocated to mortgage and practical items like a water heater and a lamp for the room that had no light. There was no room in the budget for spontaneous purchases. Besides, we already owned plenty of chairs.

This chair, however, would not only suit me — a devoted reader — it would suit the house as well. Its color perfectly matched the aged brick of the fireplace in the front room, and it was sized in the same diminutive scale.

Buying the chair would defiantly counteract all the careful planning that had gone into saving and searching for the house. It would be a hymn to the soul instead of a march to sound investment.

I stepped into the store to ask the price: six-hundred-and-some-odd dollars. "Oh" I said, gasping, and walked out. A week later the chair disappeared, and with only a faint jolt of regret, I fixed my focus again on termite inspections and home-owner's insurance.

Then, just eight days before our closing, the chair reappeared in the store window. "Look, it's back," I called to my daughter, Charley, who looked up at me quizzically from her stroller. A week later it disappeared again.

When it reappeared a second time, I rushed into the store and asked what the story was. The owner laughed. "Everyone who walks in here wants that chair," he explained, "but once they get it home, they see it doesn't match anything. It's brick red, not true red."

"Brick red," I repeated vacantly.

"Listen," he offered, "I know you've been eyeing that chair. If you pay me the two hundred bucks it cost to have it refinished — and promise not to bring it back — it's yours. I'm tired of that chair coming and going."



I slapped down my credit card, feeling the universe was on my side.

There was still, of course, the question of whether my husband would be on my side. House-hunting had been an exercise in relentless compromise. Throughout the grueling process, we operated under a heightened policy of consultation. We were like two miniature governments moving haltingly forward toward a mutually desired end. To buy a chair I had not previously mentioned, knowing that it could not be returned, was a definite breach of trust.

When Rod walked in the door that evening, he did a double take. There in front of the wall of packing boxes in our rented house was the lady's reading chair.

"I bought a chair," I explained, as if I were talking about a loaf of bread or a pair of socks.

He circled the chair, then sat down and leaned back. I held my breath.

"It's comfortable," he declared. "I like it." To my amazement, he made no inquiry about cost or any comment about need.

I exhaled. "I thought you might," I lied. I hadn't considered his thoughts at all.

About a month after we moved into our new house, my daughter threw up on the chair and on me. I had taken her there in the middle of the night. She was feverish, sweaty and sleepless. One moment I was feeling maternal and nurturing; the next, I was wet and sour.

I lurched, disgusted. "My chair," I cried. It was several conflicted moments before I forgot the chair and turned my attention to my child.

Then I sat back, pulled Carlyn close, and had a distinct vision of my chair being jumped on, spilled on, cried on and colored on. I saw the chair being dry-cleaned and spot-cleaned, re-covered in gingham, re-covered in white, re-covered in blue ticking with a plaid denim twill. It would be moved to new rooms in new houses, collecting layers of history.

I knew I should get up, bathe my sick daughter and start a load of laundry. But I wanted to experience what it felt like to be right where I was, holding my child in my arms, sitting in my chair. I finally had a house of my own, but it was in this chair that I felt what I'd long yearned for — a permanent, powerful feeling of home.



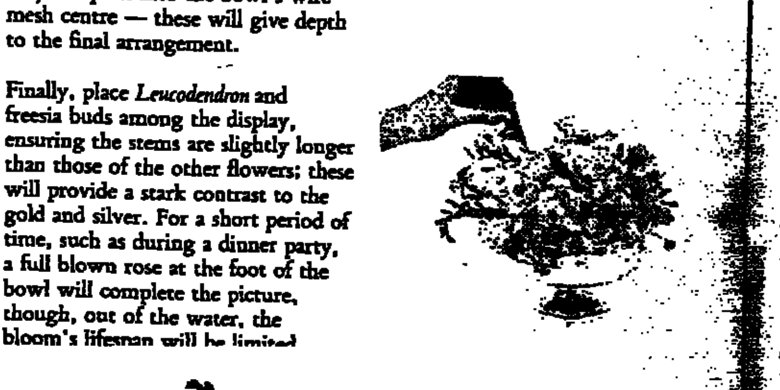
Stunning Ideas for Flower Arrangement

GOLD AND SILVER



A silver rose bowl is designed to show off roses to their best advantage as this rich display of full blown yellow roses and golden freesias demonstrates. Fill the bowl with water. Then cut short the stems of the cream spider chrysanthemums (to around 5cm, 2in) and pack into the bowl's wire mesh centre — these will give depth to the final arrangement.

Place yellow roses in between the chrysanthemums, keeping the stems slightly longer. Next, intersperse the arrangement with a few freesias.



Finally, place *Leucodendron* and freesia buds among the display, ensuring the stems are slightly longer than those of the other flowers; these will provide a stark contrast to the gold and silver. For a short period of time, such as during a dinner party, a full blown rose at the foot of the bowl will complete the picture, though, out of the water, the bloom's lifespan will be limited





